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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARABIC ESSAY AND SHORT STORY WITH  
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MUḤAMMAD LUḤFĪ  
AL-MANFALŪḤ

By

ACHMAT AHDIEL JAPPIE

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**Statement ‘that dissertation is my own work’**

I declare that the dissertation “The Development of the Arabic Essay and Short Story with Particular Reference to the Contributions of Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Achmat Ahdiel Jappie

The Development of the Arabic Essay and Short Story with Particular Reference to  
the Contributions of Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī

by

A.A.Jappie

Master of Arts degree

Arabic

Promoter: Professor Yusuf Dadoo

**Summary**

The dissertation firstly looks at how the Arabic essay and short story developed in Egypt since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then a discussion follows on the life and contribution of the Egyptian author, Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī, as representative of this literary evolution.

The general influences on Egyptian literature are discussed, and the general development of Arabic prose from 1850 onwards is then detailed, including the efforts to save Arabic literature from stagnation and degeneration. Following this, the focus is on the origins of the essay and short story. This leads to dealing with the growth and advancement of the essay and short story, together with the revival of the Arabic heritage and how the Arabic novel came into being.

Then Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī's biography, environmental circumstances and personalities that influenced his writings are focused on. Afterwards, the core discussion is al-Manfalūṭī's seven literary works, and his ideas and opinions as reflected in his writings. In conclusion, the relevance of his writings and an appraisal of his literary contributions are detailed.

**Commonly used terms:**

Arabic essay; Short story; Intellectual life; Arabic heritage; Literature; Printing press; Newspaper; Writing style; Translation; Reformation; Western civilization; Development; Culture; Classical Arabic; Islam

**The Transliteration System of Arabic Words Used is as Follows:**

Consonants:

ص	ش	س	ز	ر	ذ	د	خ	ح	ج	ث	ت	ب	أ
	sh	s	Z	r	th	d	Kh		j	th	t	b	a

ي	هـ	و	ن	م	ل	ك	ق	ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط	ض
y	h	w	n	m	l	k	q	f	gh	`			

Long Vowels:

إي	أو	آ
ī	ū	ā

Short Vowels:

أ	إ	ـ
u	I	a

Diphthongs:

أو	أى
Au	Ai

double letter	ء	ء
ّ (shadda)	ء (hamza)	(tanwin) an in un

**The Development of the Arabic Essay and Short Story with Particular Reference to the  
Contributions of Muḥammad al-Luḥfī al-Manfalūḥ**

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**The Development of the Arabic Essay and Short Story with Particular Reference to the  
Contributions of Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī**

**Introduction**

Through the mighty instrument of language a human being can change his / her environment. S(he) can communicate not only factual information, but can pass this information on to succeeding generations who can reap the benefits of this knowledge and experience of the past. S(he) can convey thoughts and emotional experiences through the written word, and does so in a manner that is aesthetically satisfying to him- or herself and in an artistic form. To make it meaningful to his / her readers s(he) not only records, but contemplates and interprets the experience. When an artistic form is created through the medium of language, it is known as literature.

The study of literature cannot be dismissed as a pastime for the dilettante, or as an escape from life's problems, ... On the contrary, in literature we are confronted with the most fundamental issues in life. Literature is concerned with the very stuff of Everyman's experience; and it is in this quality of universality that its value lies. Even though a literary work is many hundreds of years old, it may still have something to say about the common human experiences of birth and death, of love and loneliness, of desire and fulfillment. It may still comment meaningfully on problems as old as man himself, which can never be finally solved, but must be considered and interpreted anew by every generation. It is doubtful whether the mere fact that someone is acquainted with literature will inevitably make a better person of him; but the study of literature offers the opportunity for the widening of one's horizons, for the refinement of one's sensibilities, and for the deepening of one's understanding of the human condition (Heese and Lawton: 1-2 ).

A language and literary culture which is eminent for its continuity and richness is Arabic. Following the rise and expansion of *Islām*, many advanced and affluent societies developed in various Middle East cities. They gave expression in a language and literature of great variety and sophistication. "Mirroring their times as all authors do, the poets, raconteurs, historians, and jurists of the Arabic-Islamic world gave in their works their impressions of life both as it was and as they thought it should be" (Le Gassick 1979: 1).

Arabs are indeed appreciative of their illustrious literature and its memorable development:

We Arabs are proud of our literature; its roots stretch over one thousand and five hundred years. Since then and up to now, the Arabic art and Arabic intellect have not stopped to create and innovate – we can therefore feel honoured with this history, this literature and this wonderful, continuous intellectual progress. Our pride is increased in our magnificent heritage and its glorious origins, especially when we realize that the oldest Western (literary) text is not older than eight centuries and the oldest Arabic text dates back to at least one thousand and seven hundred years (Zulām 1992: 37).

Arabic literature is generally divided into *shi'r* (poetry) and *nathr* (prose). *Nathr* is in turn classified into *nathr fannī masjū'* (artistic rhymed prose), *nathr mursal* (unrhymed prose) and *nathr 'ilmī* (scientific prose) (Al-Bāwī n.d: 12). The type of great interest to us will be *nathr fannī masjū'* because it includes the social essay, the sermon, the story (short, long, narrative), the play, the biography and autobiography, the epistle, the *maqāma*, and literary criticism.

Furthermore, mainly to facilitate study and research, Arabic literature is normally divided into historical periods. Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Bāwī, for example, distinguishes the following six periods:

1. The period before *Islām* – also known as the *Jāhiliyya* – which stretched back to about one hundred and fifty years before the dawn of *Islām*.
2. The Islamic period – starting from the beginning of *Islām* and ending with the establishment of the *Umayyad* (Umayyad) dynasty in 41 AH (661 AD).
3. The *Umayyad* period – starting from 41 AH and ending with the rise of the *ʿAbbāsī* (Abasid) dynasty in 132 AH (750 AD).
4. The *ʿAbbāsī* period – starting from the fall of the *Umayyad* dynasty in 132 AH and ending with the invasion of Baghdad by the Mongols in 656 AH (1258 AD).
5. The *ʿUthmāni* (Ottoman) and *Mamlūk* (Mameluke) periods – these periods followed the fall of Baghdad and lasted until the ‘modern era’.
6. The modern period – the period that started roughly with Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 (Al-Bāwī n.d: 10-11).

Arabic works that discuss these genres (their development, characteristics, authors, etcetera) – and in Egypt specifically – are, amongst others, *al-qīṣa al-ʿArabiyya fī Miṣr* by Ḥamza Muḥammad Būqārī, *al-Adab al-ʿArabī al-Muʿāṣir fī Miṣr* by Shawqī Dāif and *al-Manfalūṭ Imām al-Bayān al-ʿArabī* by Muḥammad Abū al-Anwār. Other sources discuss the development in the whole Arab world generally. Invariably they also emphasise certain aspects at the expense of others – and these ‘others’ may be equally important – and, due to their brevity, contain information that others do not. Some of them (by, for example,

Gibb, Goldziher, Le Gassick, Nicholson, Badawi, Khouri and Algar, Qāsim) will be mentioned as we go along. Būqarī discusses life in Egypt during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its role in the development of the short story and the maqama. The rest of the book is dedicated to different short story writers and the best work of each (from al-Manfalūḡī to Taimūr) to show how the short story developed. Abū al-Anwār very briefly traces the development of the Arabic essay until the appearance of al-Manfalūḡī; the rest of his book is about the life of al-Manfalūḡī and some of his essays. Shawqī Dīḡaif, again, firstly writes about the history of Egypt before and after Napoleon's Egyptian campaign to put the development of Arabic poetry and prose in perspective. He is the only author who gives due justice to the role that the press had played in the progress of modern Arabic literature, its struggle to rid literature of artificiality and forcedness, enigma and obscurity (*saj`* and *badī`*), and the way in which Western literature influenced Arab writers. Our endeavor will be to coordinate and integrate all these different aspects in order to present a comprehensive and clear image of the development of the Arabic essay and short story.

The book in the English language that gives a general overview of the development of Arabic literature is *Modern Arabic Literature, 1800 – 1970* by John A. Haywood (1971). It deals with the development of poetry and prose in the Arab countries that produced significant literature at the time, but for our purpose we shall restrict the overview to prose in Egypt. Another book *Critical Introduction to Modern Arabic Poetry* (1974), by M.M. Badawi, also gives an overview, but as the title suggests, its main focus is on poetry. The account of the emergence of the novel in Egypt by H. Gibb (*The Egyptian Novel*, published in 1933 as part of his *Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature*) we could unfortunately not find, but Haywood quotes Gibb speaking of the “great variety and satisfaction to be enjoyed in classical Arabic literature” and of the fact that “Egyptians with modern education could read French and English novels in the original” (1971: 135).

Haywood begins with a brief political sketch of Egypt during the Ottoman rule, and then moves onto the arrival of Napoleon “who broke the power of the Mamelukes, and could therefore present himself as a champion of the Arabs” (Haywood 1971: 30). He briefly shows how the introduction of the printing press served as an ‘exterior’ stimulus and also how the role of Muḡammad `Alī Pāsha, Governor of Egypt, and his successors, was a stimulus ‘from within’ for the ‘beginnings of the literary renaissance’. In the present dissertation, much more detail and emphasis will be laid on these two factors. Subsequently the pioneering roles of personalities like Rifa`at al-Ṭahḡāwī, Jabartī, Ḥasan al-`Attār and *Shaikh* Ḥasan al-Quwaidir are touched upon. We endeavor to elaborate on especially al-Ṭahḡāwī, and then add some more prominent contributors of the early stage of the re-awakening of Arabic literature.

Although Haywood mentions that “simplification of language and style was needed” (1971: 71), he only partly shows how the old literature was excessively rhetorical and how al-Ṭahāwī and others managed to a certain extent break away from these traditions and initiated the production of some creative literature. We shall try to indicate this in more detail in its appropriate place.

In the chapter ‘The First Flowering of the Literary Renaissance’, Haywood discusses the writings of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and his ‘collaborator’ Muḥammad `Abduh and shows how the former would influence later ‘pupils’ who achieved fame as writers (like al-Muwailāḥī and Adīb Isḥāq). He only slightly touches on the role of newspapers, although it was such a prominent variable in the re-awakening; again, this point will be elaborated upon substantially. Thereafter, he traces the contribution of later writers chronologically – personalities like Qāsim Amīn, Maḥmūd Taimūr and al-Manfalūḥī – under the heading ‘The Short Story’. The latter he elaborates about as a novelist and essayist in a subsequent chapter. He only mentions al-Manfalūḥī’s adaptations of “several French Romantic novels – *Paul et Virginie*, Coppée’s *Pour la Couronne*, A. Karr’s *Le Tilleul*, and Rostand’s *Cyrano de Bergerac* among them” (1971: 135). We, of course, endeavor to deal with them in greater detail.

Haywood continues to show how Egypt would predominate with translations of novels from European languages, and very briefly touches on how the original, as opposed to translated, Arabic novel first flourished in Syria and Lebanon. “Christians played a major part in writing them. The shackles of high-flown classical language were being thrown off, and these novels were readable, but not of the first rank” (1971: 133). The contribution of the indefatigable Jurjī Zaidān as a prolific historical novelist is then discussed. Other novelists and their works briefly discussed in this chapter are Muḥammad Ḥusain Haikal and `Abd al-Qādir al-Māzinī. Under ‘The Essay’ he states that “the *risala* and the *maqama* are the classical antecedents of the modern Arabic essay” (1971: 137); indeed they were, but he does not actually show how the former two led to the emergence of the latter. It will be part of this dissertation’s endeavor to explain how the *maqāma* gave rise to the modern Arabic novel. The *maqāma* was “the last really important stylistic innovation of Classical Arabic prose ... created by Badī` al-Zamān (d. 1007), and then developed by al-Ḥarīrī to one of the liveliest branches of Arabic literature” (Bateson 1967: 2.332), and thus needs to be examined in more detail. He concludes this section by devoting five pages to al-Manfalūḥī and some of his works, reiterating:

... an author who, more than any other author of the period, made the essay his own special form; a writer

whose name long dominated accounts of modern Arabic literature in Arabic textbooks used in schools; moreover one who, in his style and even his ideas, seems to typify the transition from the traditional to the ‘modern’ (1971: 138).

At the end of the chapter, translations of two essays from *al-Naḥārāt*: ‘Tomorrow’ and ‘The First Cup’ are found in which “An attempt has been made to reflect the Arabic style in the translations, but it has not been possible to transfer the rhymes to English” (1971: 142).

In the final chapter a broad picture of Arabic literary activity during the period between the two world wars, and then up to 1970 in some respects, is outlined. He briefly illustrates how remarkably the Arabs were able to absorb Western writing, progressing, in 100 years or so, from translations and adaptations, to producing original, creative and very readable literature. He achieves this by discussing the works of the then living writers and those who had died since 1950 as representative of this remarkable development. The greater part is devoted to some of the works of Tāhā Ḥusain, Taufiq al-Ḥakīm, Maḥmūd Taimūr and Najīb Maḥfūf. He deals with their contributions in the light of the prevailing politico-economic circumstances. He concludes with a brief overview of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sharqāwī, Aḥmad Amīn, Zākī Mubārak, Salāma Mūsā and Ḥusain Mu’nīs. Some of them were of course leading authors, while some were not so prominent. We shall endeavor to broaden the list and add more detail.

Haywood concludes the book, feeling “a sense of the magnitude of modern Arabic literature – its strides, and its solid achievements. ... Above all, Arabic literature is one of ideas and feeling, with many writers of originality and individuality” (1971: 217).

The chief aim for writing about Muḥammad al-Manfalūḥī is to study the different factors which influenced him, whether special factors related to the position of his family or friends, or general factors related to the period in which he lived. This will in turn help us to understand his literary *maslak* (methodology) as well as why he chose to concentrate on that specific form of literature and not on another. It will also be an aid in understanding why he preferred to write on the topics which he did, and at the same time we shall understand why his literary style is regarded as innovative, original and so effective, and why his essays and short stories, for example, excelled in treating social issues of the day.

The books on his life and works all differ in their emphases and, as mentioned before, some contain information (sometimes crucial) that others do not. The books that we shall try to coordinate and integrate – see the bibliography for more details – are Arabic works by Bassām ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb al-Jābī, Majīd ḥarād, ḥamza Muḥammad Būqarī, Dr. Muḥammad Abū al-Anwār, Dr. Shauqī Ḍaif, Dr. Riyāḥ Qāsim and Dr. Jibrāīl Sulaimān Jabbūr, and

English works by Trevor le Gassick and J.A. Haywood so as to give a comprehensive account of his life and works. To our knowledge, nothing as comprehensive on this topic has been written in English before.

Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī was famous for the literary articles which he wrote in the newspaper *al-Mu'ayyid* (The Corroborator) from 1907 onwards. He was the only writer who enchanted the Arabic populace with his new literary *bayān* (eloquent and clear rhetoric). He started out with poetry and then started to write short stories, becoming the liberator of literature from difficult *sajʿ* (rhymed prose – a passage in *sajʿ* is said to be *masjūʿ*) and awkward *badīʿ* (literally, innovation = metaphoric style). His most memorable feat can be summarized as being ‘a teacher of manners (*muʿallim al-akhlāq*), a caller to virtue (*dāʾi al-faḥḥa*) and a leader in promoting social welfare (*qāʾid al-iḥṣān*)’ (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 7).

The discerning critic, Dr. Riyāḥ Qāsim, summed up al-Manfalūṭī and his works as follows:

He was primarily a writer of social issues, who lived solely for the concerns of his society ... he involved himself with revealing the vices and shortcomings of his nation, writing about gambling, dancing, suicide, drunkenness, bribery in government departments, ... and about the nature of the battles between the conservatives and the reformists, ... and about some of Western civilization’s evil and immoral aspects, not forgetting also the dangers and drawbacks of living in the past with its stagnation. ... In everything he wrote, his aim was to fill the ever-widening gap in the Islamic society ... and in doing so, he called for reconciliation, the liberation of thought from the chains of imitation and the judicious and erudite use of the Arabic language. ... He wrote for the man in the street, not for specific people, he wrote to empower the people, not to impress them ....

From an Islamic angle, he called for cleansing the religion from innovations and misguided practices, a return to the original fountain springs of early *Islām* ... for good morals and behaviour ... to scorn wine, gambling and vice. He scoffed at Muslims who prayed in order to be seen or who feigned asceticism – those whose outward actions appear good, but their insides were spurious ...

Politically, he wrote with the intention of preventing schisms and disunity in his nation, stating that no one except the occupying English benefited from that. His articles were severe in criticism of the English, seeing in them only affliction, destruction and catastrophe for Egypt ... if they did not confront the enemy, the succeeding generations will despise their elders till time immemorial (2001: 20-21).

Abū al-Anwār quotes Dr. Aḥmad Haikal who pin-pointed al-Manfalūṭī’s position in Arabic literature: “His writing revealed a lot of innovation and originality and this became the hallmark of his compositions. His efforts in promoting a new literary style were comparable to those of (Aḥmad) Shauqī’s revival of Arabic poetry. Al-Manfalūṭī was the apex of those who wrote in the new style which was pioneered by (*Shaikh*) Muḥammad ʿAbduh during the previous period” (2000: 7).

Experienced writers of his time described him as *Imām al-Bayān* (The Leader in Eloquent and Clear Rhetoric), a genius, the best writer of his time. The press gave him the



nick-name of *Amīr al-Bayān* (The Prince of Eloquence). According to the magazine *al-Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī* he became a member of the Science Society of Damascus which published a *rithā'* (dirge) by the poet Shafīq Jabrī after al-Manfalūṭī's death (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 7-8). Aḥmad Shauqī also wrote a long *rithā'* in honor of al-Manfalūṭī, called *Sāhib Liwā' al-'Abqariyya* (Bearer of the Flag of Genius) (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 8).

Abū al-Anwār quotes Professor Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt as having said, "When al-Manfalūṭī's style dawned in (the paper) *al-Mu'ayyid* readers and writers saw (in his style) what they had never seen before in the works of al-Jāḥiṣ and in the (previous) use of metaphors and writing style. They accepted it with open arms and would eagerly await the appearance of his articles every Thursday in *al-Mu'ayyid* rereading those five, six, seven times, believing that God chose al-Manfalūṭī to bring about this revival in writing style" (2000: 9).

According to Abū al-Anwār, *Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Basharī* described al-Manfalūṭī's narrative style after reading his *Magdalene* in 1917 as follows: "I have read many of the best books and short stories of prominent writers, but none has made such an impression on me as this story by al-Manfalūṭī. I wish him a long life so that he can outshine all of them and continue to touch the spirit and soul of his readers in such a wonderful way" (2000: 9).

Ṭāhā Ḥussain reiterated in 1913 that al-Manfalūṭī was given huge talents which were inborn and instinctive. Al-Manfalūṭī's stories enchanted him so much that he felt as if he was living with its characters, and that he had hardly finished a story when he would read it over and over again. He thanked God for sending someone like al-Manfalūṭī to breathe new life and spirit into the spiritless stories and styles of the time (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 9).

Brockelmann said about him, "He was the most famous Arabic writer of his time" (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 9). Another orientalist, the Englishman Gibb, proclaimed in 1940 that al-Manfalūṭī's writings spread widely amongst Arabic readers from Baghdad to Marrakech. This indicated that they found something very worthwhile in them, and that his writings reflected feelings which echoed in a very powerful way all over the Islamic world (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 9).

Professor al-'Aqqād felt that al-Manfalūṭī had no equal amongst the foremost writers since the dawn of the literary revival before his birth and after his demise. No prose writer could 'marry' *inshā'* (the art of composition writing) and *uslūb* (writing style) as could the author of *al-Naḥārāt* (Philosophical Reflections) and *al-'Abarāt* (The Tears). Al-Manfalūṭī was the first to bring together beauty and appropriateness with simple words, clear meaning, and peaceful rhythm (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 10). He was the 'link' which was needed to

complete the chain of progress set in motion by *Shaikh* Muḥammad `Abduh (1849-1905) and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-98) in the introduction of an easy, clear and eloquent style of writing after the Arab language was stagnating under the excessive use of *saj`* (rhymed prose) and *badī`* (rhetorical style) which had become “merely rhetorical ornaments, the distinguishing mark of all eloquence whether spoken or written...” (Reynold A. Nicholson 1966: 74). What `Abduh and al-Afghānī initiated, he continued and improved upon. Al-Manfalūḥī can be considered as the essayist who started a new trend in the style of essay and short story writing – as if he was *the* person chosen by fate to give impetus and new vigor to the use of written classical Arabic before it would have declined and degenerated to a level too dreadful to think of. Although some writers like Adīb Isḥāq and `Abd Allāh Nadīm moved away from the use of metaphorical style (*badī`*) and rhymed prose (*saj`*), there was still a need for “... true simplicity in style, a style which could paint all shades of feeling, thought and experience with beautiful, musical and clear expression. This man would be Muḥafā Luḥfī al-Manfalūḥī” (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 15).

John A. Haywood, in his book mentioned earlier, concluded his account of the ‘first flowering of the Arab literary renaissance’ with an appreciation of an author “who, more than any other author of the period, made the essay his own special form; a writer ... who, in his style and even his ideas, seems to typify the transition from the traditional to the ‘modern’. This author was Muḥafā Luḥfī al-Manfalūḥī” (1971: 138), and on page 139: “... it was *al-Naḥārāt* which put him in the first flight of Arab authors. In fact they mark him as possibly the greatest of all Arab essayists ... He was a journalist of genius” ... With him, journalism had become art” (1971: 142)

Al-Manfalūḥī would markedly influence the generations which came after him. A study of his biography and literary works is thus invaluable, indeed very necessary, in the discussion of the development of modern Arabic prose. At the same time the study can serve as a typical example (a microcosm) of how a writer played a role in the development of a major language in a specific country and ultimately on a universal level. Of importance, too, is what one can learn from his writings because they faithfully reflect local political and cultural conditions of the period he had lived in.

The book on Muḥafā Luḥfī al-Manfalūḥī by Doctor Muḥammad Abū al-Anwār won the King Faisal International Prize for Arabic Literature in 1995. This highlights and emphasizes al-Manfalūḥī’s role and position in the history of modern Arabic literature (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 10).

To fully understand Muḥammad Luḥfī al-Manfalūḥ's contribution to the development of the Arabic essay and Arabic short story (not only in Egypt, but in the greater Arab world at the time), we must again look at the historical development of these literary genres (including their topics and contents, noting the conditions in that society and elsewhere before their appearance and causes of their appearance). The importance of the history of a people is appropriately and succinctly summarized by Ḥamza Muḥammad Būqarī in his *al-Qiṣṣa al-Qaḍīra*: "The history of a people is a series of (closely) connected links in a chain, (each one following another), and each link a result of the one preceding it and each one a precursor to the one to follow. In history there are no gaps and haphazard coincidences; on the contrary, the events in history are intimately and irreversibly related" (Būqarī 1979: 7). Even the orientalist Reynold A. Nicholson found himself obliged to "dwell at considerable length on various matters of historical interest, in order to bring out what is really characteristic and important from our special point of view" because "The ideas which reveal themselves in Arabic literature are so intimately connected with the history of the people, and so incomprehensible apart from the external circumstances in which they arose ..." (1966: xxx) when he wrote on Arabic literature. Of course, due to space restrictions, one has to be brief in recounting the history and one has to even skip many links and only concentrate on the most important and appropriate links relevant to the topic.

The historical aspects are studied to present the efficacious factors in the genesis and evolution of the specific literature genres, so that the relationship between a writer and his/her environment and period can be seen. Historical facts will portray the different factors and influences which gave impetus to the development and progress of literature and the different directions it took (Ḍaif 1974: 7). Many researchers, especially from the West, have taken a keen interest in modern Arabic literature, but most of them just give a glimpse of its history, or hardly mention the names of writers and their works, presumably because they were not deemed to be important or they failed to understand their importance. The result is misconceptions and more questions than answers because readers do not understand the allusions to names, places, ideas, and so forth. Muḥammad Luḥfī al-Manfalūḥ and his works is a case in point. Furthermore, the writer under study is not well-known outside the Arab world because, as the famous orientalist H.A.R. Gibb reiterated: "But while practically all extant works of importance are being rapidly made accessible to Arabists, comparatively few of them are at the service of Western scholarship in reliable translations ..." (1963: 2).

The inclusion of the significant historical events, factors and circumstances and the brief mention of some writers (due to their significance in the development of the Arabic essay and short story) should hopefully clarify al-Manfalūḥ's and the other writers'

personal, social and cultural circumstances. The survey and brief analyses of their works should elucidate their special characteristics and attributes and their place in contemporary Arabic literature. Not everybody would agree that all those mentioned were great, but each one is important in the way which he/she contributed (knowingly or unknowingly) to the development of the Arabic short story and essay as we know them today (Daif 1974: 5).

The role of Egypt in the development of modern classical Arabic is also of utmost importance. Circumstances there before the nineteenth century and developments after 1800 make gripping reading in as far as a people would not only struggle against oppression for their personal and political freedom, but also for the emancipation of their language from the chains and shackles of obscure and difficult writing styles. The relationship between historical factors and the degeneracy of a language (and subsequently its literature), is concisely illustrated by M.M. Badawi:

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century these (Arab) countries were still provinces of a declining Ottoman empire, that had lapsed into virtual isolation from intellectual movements in the west. The Arab provinces lived in a state of even greater cultural isolation. At the same time the political instability from which they suffered; the narrowness of the prevalent system of education which was chiefly theocentric in character and which did not encourage much initiative and originality; the lack of patronage as the result of the relegation of Arab lands to the position of provinces governed by Turks untutored in the Arabic tongue; the replacement of Arabic by Turkish as the official language; the scarcity and high cost of books owing to the absence of Arabic printing presses (for the purpose of printing Muslim and Arabic literature); the constant living on the cultural past, and not on what was best in the past, for that matter – all these factors resulted in the degeneration of the literature of the period, which remained basically medieval in outlook and tended to be slavishly imitative of the past (1974: 6-7).

These aspects will be clearly elucidated in chapter one. Through the heroic struggles and endeavors of a group of dedicated and patriotic Arab writers Egypt would give the Arab world masterful judiciary *khiṭābāt* (oratory discourses) the modern *maqālāt* (literary essays), *qiṣṣa* (short stories), *masraḥiyyāt* (theatrical plays) and even the novel (*uqṣūṣ*) which were based on Western models and which were unfamiliar to the Arab world. The ambition of these writers was “to rescue the Arabic language from its degeneration in the preceding centuries and to restore the heritage of classical literary art” (Gibb 1963: 159). Their newspaper articles, essays and translation of Western compositions, coupled with the revival of the Arabic *turāth* (heritage) would have far reaching effects on the resurrection and development of the Arabic literary language. Egyptians gave rise to “... an Arab intellectual revival in the areas exposed to Western penetration” and Arab Muslims found that “... the classical works from the *Qur’ān* to Ibn Khaldūn’s *al-Muqaddima* ... even in the light of Western intellectualism ... were not contrary to human progress ...” (Goldziher 1966: 159).

The general revival of literary Arabic during the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries is frequently termed *al-nahḍa*, from the triliteral verb *nahaḥa* which means ‘to rise’ or ‘to rise up’, and from there ‘renaissance’ or ‘revival’. It will be very absorbing to trace the development of these ‘new’ forms of Arabic literature and how the writers of this literature ‘restored the heritage of classical literary art’. Also,

For the Muslim world and especially its Arab lands, the nineteenth century ushered in an era of storm and stress, both from within and without. Napoleon’s meteoric invasion of Egypt in 1798 tore aside the veil of apathy which had cut them off from the new life of Europe and gave the death-blow to medievalism. Slowly at first, but with increasing momentum, the literature and ideas of the western world gained a lodgment, and stimulated the production of a new Modern Arabic literature (Gibb 1963: 159).

It will be endeavored to describe and discuss these ‘storms and stresses’ as far as Arabic literature is concerned and how the ‘new life of Europe’ and how ‘the western world gained a lodgment and stimulated the production of a new Modern Arabic literature’.

Commenting on the role of Egypt in the development of Arabic literature, Ignace Goldziher wrote in the epilogue: “The Egyptian campaign (of Napoleon I)... proved to be a turning-point in the history of *Islām* and Arabic literature. It marked the beginning of Western influence over *Islām* in politics, economics, and culture alike” (1966: 159). One would thus understand and appreciate why “the Moslems in that country (Egypt)... (had) come more and more under European influence” (Reynold A. Nicholson 1966: 468).

No less important was the presence of the Azhar that made Cairo a suitable centre for the *nahḍa*. It was an institute for Islamic learning, a repository of religious sciences, and a leading treasury of Arabic language and literature; so, “whatever stimulus might come from the west, any new Arabic literature would still need a solid foundation in the past. From this point of view, Cairo had a distinct advantage over Beirut as a centre of revival” (Haywood 1971: 32). Further, the *maqāma* (whose development is so crucial in the present study) “survived in Egypt at a time when it was dead or dying in Syria and the Lebanon” (Haywood 1971: 135).

One of the main aims of this study is to present the historical, social, religious, intellectual and political factors and influences which shaped and forged Egyptian thought and subsequently the development of modern classical Arabic in Egypt. It goes without saying that these events are critical in creating a milieu favourable to any literary revival and its subsequent progress. They, too, supply the background for all the literature produced after 1800, as nearly every major Arab writer was concerned in one way or another with the political, social, religious, literary and economic issues, and his / her attitude towards them is

reflected in his / her writings. The omission of these crucial issues would present a warped picture of modern classical Arabic literature. Remembering that in a work on literature only brief sketches can be given, this will be done in a general way and then the focus will be on a specific writer, namely Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī. Hopefully, in this way a better understanding can be obtained in ones reading of modern Arabic literature, and ideas, events, political and religious movements and Arab writers (generally and Egyptian specifically) can be understood in their proper contexts. These issues will be dealt with fully in the body of the present work. It is my belief that the knowledge of the history of the development of modern classical Arabic in Egypt will go a long way in shedding more light on the subject and will remove misconceptions and perplexities which still exist. The importance of history notwithstanding, questions of language, form and style will be dealt with. Of great help will be to use predominantly Arabic sources of leading authorities on the topic. Again, to our knowledge, nothing as comprehensive on this topic has been written in English before. References will be given in the majority of cases and where al-Manfalūṭī is concerned, the native sources will be referred to.

The study will show how Egypt came to prominence in the Arab Islamic world after playing second fiddle during the previous centuries. She was surpassed by the *Ḥijāz* and Iraq during the *Umayyad* and *ʿAbbāsī* Dynasties, *Shām* during the period of Saif al-Daula and *al-Andalus* during the periods of the *mulūk al-ṭawāʾif* (petty kings and princelings) and always played a mediocre role during all the succeeding Arab and Turkish dynasties. It is interesting to note that “The Mongol (and other subsequent) invasion(s) virtually obliterated their (Arab) national life, though in Syria and Egypt they maintained their traditions of culture under Turkish rule...” (Reynold A. Nicholson 1966: xxx).

Egypt would give not only to itself, but to the whole Arab world a new Egyptian language and literature. Readers from Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, the *Ḥijāz*, Sudan and Morocco would welcome the Egyptian newspaper articles and literary essays. The Egyptian language became the *lingua franca* in all the mentioned countries, surpassing the local dialects in popularity. The result was that Egypt became the leader of the Arab East and she came to occupy the place of pride in the field of Arab culture and modern Arabic literature. As Reynold A. Nicholson put it: “The chief centres of Arabian life, such as it is, are henceforth Syria and Egypt...” (1966: 442).

Egyptian books, too, were widely used in the Arab world and this led to the sharing of knowledge and ideas in science, literature, culture, politics and economics. In addition “The spread of printing popularized the revival of classical Arabic literature and the knowledge of Western, mainly French and English, literatures. A large-scale translating

activity familiarized the Muslims not only with Western natural sciences and technology but also with the French and English literature, both classical and modern” (Goldziher 1966: 159). While by no means the main aim of the work, it will be seen how the “introduction of the printing-press in 1821 was an epoch-making measure” and how it “rekindled the enthusiasm of the Arabs for their national literature...” and how the “science and culture of Europe have been rendered accessible in translations and adaptations...” (Reynold A. Nicholson 1966: 468-69).

The study of the development of literature in Egypt also shows that traditionalism and modernism do not run counter to, but parallel, to each other in modern Arabic literature. As Ignace Goldziher puts it in his classic ‘A Short History of Classical Arabic Literature’: “Arab nationalism as reflected in modern literature does not imply any break-away with the Muslim past; on the contrary, it draws renewed strength from it” (1966: 160).

The present study of the development of Arabic literature in Egypt and the works and life of Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī will, amongst others, show this struggle between traditionalism and modernism and how it influenced literature in its widest sense, and simultaneously shed light on some aspects of Islamic modernism and Arab intellectual revival. Ignace Goldziher justifiably concluded in the ‘Epilogue’: “The history of classical Arabic literature may end at the close of the 12<sup>th</sup>/ 18<sup>th</sup> century; yet, it has remained and is to remain a living study, without which Islamic modernism and Arab intellectual revival cannot be understood and interpreted” (1966: 160).

As far as the research outline is concerned, the dissertation will be structured in terms of 8 chapters that logically cohere and lead from one issue to the next. The introduction has, amongst others, given details of previous scholarship and sources linked to the topics, leading up to our own contribution. The first chapter will deal with the historical background which, as explained above, is of crucial importance to the understanding and appreciation of our topic. Chapter 2 will cover the general development of Arabic prose (thereby adding more background) before going into the specifics of our actual topic, namely the development of the Arabic short story and essay, and finally the contribution of al-Manfalūṭī as representative of this development. Thus, the second chapter will lead to chapter 3, namely the growth of the Arabic essay and short story. Nothing as comprehensive on these three topics has been written in English before. After this exhaustive background, chapters 4 to 8 will be about the second part of our topic, namely the contributions of Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī. To gain a good and clear understanding of this author and his works, chapters 4 and 5 will deal with his circumstantial and factual background. Seen against this background, it will be clear who

and what influenced him in his writings. Influential persons during those times, for example, played an important role in whether a writer was given an opportunity to write and / or publish his works – it depended to a large extent on whether he found favour or not with the rulers of the day and whether he had the right ‘connections’. The sixth chapter then covers his seven prose works and some of his poetry. These works will be covered in such a way that it will show his unique and innovative style of writing (and how it differed from his predecessors’) for which he was so famous. Knowledge of the historical aspects and his 7 major works will explain much of his opinions and ideas (as gleaned from his writings); this, then, will be duly covered in chapter 7. It will also illustrate his themes, topics, and commitment to certain causes. Finally and fittingly, the last chapter will give an assessment of his works, covering both positive and negative criticism. A note on the relevance of his writings will neatly round off the topic before a final conclusion is made. This conclusion will summarize all the main points of the aforementioned chapters, review the substance of the discussion, and mention some aspects that can be further researched.

Each chapter will have a short introduction (foreshadowing what will be discussed in the body) and a concise conclusion / summary. A paragraph will deal with a coherent discussion of one specific aspect or several related aspects rather than in general. The sub-sections in each chapter will also be coherent, the one issue logically leading to the next; thereby causing the topics in the body to make sense as divisions and as a sequence. This outline, together with a chronological development, will thus give shape to the dissertation material.

Because of the nature of the research proposal, our point of departure in the theoretical framework of the dissertation will be the thematic study of literary data, and the methodology will be theoretical (as opposed to fieldwork) and expository (as opposed to persuasive). Information will be retrieved from books and due references will be given, and wherever a judgment is expressed, facts supporting the judgment will be provided.

The English translation of terms (especially literary) and titles of books, newspapers and articles will be given the first time it is mentioned in the text and then only again afterward when necessary for understanding. This is in conformity with the fact that the topic is intended for a limited audience with special interests. The transliteration will be according to the system given on page 2. The use of the masculine for generic terms will be avoided, that is, gender-neutral terms will be employed wherever possible.



## **Chapter 1**

### **General Influences on the Development of Arabic Literature in Egypt**

In this chapter the general influences on Egyptian literature (*ca.* 1800 – 1850) are discussed, namely significant historical events (the influence of the West after Napoleon Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign, the contribution of the Egyptian viceroys, the growth of nationalism and the English occupation), how European intellectual life influenced Arab intellectual life (and how the two streams eventually became one), and finally the far reaching effects of the printing press and newspapers. As stated in the Introduction, the historical aspects are studied to present the efficacious factors in the genesis and evolution of the specific literature genres, so that the relationship between a writer and his / her environment and period can be seen. Historical facts will portray the different factors and influences which gave impetus to the development and progress of literature and the different directions it took. It is necessary to deal in some detail with these issues because its omission would present a distorted picture of modern classical Arabic literature.

#### **1.1 Significant Events**

##### **1.1.1 Life in Egypt Before 1800**

Egypt was one of the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, governed by a *walī* and officials of non-Arab origin. Amongst these foreigners were the *Mamālīk* (singular *Mamlūk*, anglicized as *Mameluke*) which means 'owned' or 'possessed' and frequently translated as 'white slaves'. They descended from enfranchised slaves, and usurped power in Egypt, which they ruled from 1250 till the Ottoman conquest of the country in 1517.

The people of Egypt were collapsing under the pressure of the Ottoman rule since the Turks invaded and conquered them during the sixteenth century and caused them to live in misery, distress and financial straits. This was, according to the Egyptian Professor Shauqī Ḍaif, because "... the Turks were conquering fighters and not a people concerned with civilization and had no proper organization in governance and politics" (1974: 11). This is, of course, a controversial point and one must point out that the Turks *did* care about civilization, as can be borne out by the magnificent Sulaimānī Mosque and Library in Istanbul, amongst others. Some of their feats are still lauded today. Concerning this issue Nicholson wrote, "The Mamelukes were rough soldiers, who seldom indulged in any refinement, but they had a

royal taste for architecture, as the visitor to Cairo may still see. Their administration, though disturbed by frequent mutinies and murders, was tolerably prosperous on the whole, and their victories over the Mongol hosts, as well as the crushing blows which they dealt to the Crusaders, gave *Islām* new prestige” (1966: 447). Interestingly, none other than Tāhā Ḥusain, defended the Mameluke period; he regarded it as a flourishing period in Islamic history in Egypt – many excellent collections of Arabic books appeared:

It is naïve to conclude that the Mameluke era was oppressive; rather, it was one of the most blooming Islamic periods in Cairo and the Arab lands. During this period the following superb books emerged: *Nihāya al-Arab* by Nuwairī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār* by Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Ṣubḥ al-A‘shī fī ṣinā‘atī al-Inshā’* by al-Qashqandī, the very famous *Lisān al-‘Arab* by Ibn Manẓūr and the abridged versions of *al-Aghānī* by al-Asfahānī and Ibn Manẓūr. These books, amongst others, are regarded as monumental scientific encyclopedias, some of it reaching twenty volumes ... It was thus not an age of tyranny, but a period of Arabic encyclopedias, and from an artistic and civilizational angle, one of the most brilliant periods in *Islām* ... The actual era of oppression was the period of the Ottoman Turks in Egypt ... because they did not contribute anything ... they destroyed Islamic civilization, and did not replace it with anything ... they took the books from the mosques and locked it up in libraries, making access to it almost impossible ... the world must urge Turkey to return these books to Egypt (Al-Dasūqī 2002: 83-4).

The Turks undeniably destroyed the Byzantine Empire during the fifteenth century when they conquered Constantinople (Istanbul). This victory, however, had its beneficial results because many of the participants who were interested in civilization and culture, migrated to Europe and contributed to the revival of Greek and Roman civilization there (Ḍaif 1974: 11). But in Egypt and *Shām* (the present Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine) – which became the cradle of the Islamic civilization at the time – the Turks destroyed almost all traces of culture, literature, science and arts. Furthermore, the erudite scholars from Egypt and *Shām* had no other country to migrate to; alas, a group of them were exiled to Constantinople and the remaining ones, having lost their freedom, were unable to produce any new science and literature. Intellectual and literary life in Egypt thus came to a standstill, except for some meager efforts in *al-Azhar* (founded by the Fatimids and the most famous and oldest institution of higher learning in Cairo). Oppression, poverty and misery set in (Ḍaif 1974:12).

### 1.1.2 Napoleon Bonaparte’s French Campaign

Under these oppressive and stifling circumstances the French, with Napoleon Bonaparte at the helm, arrived in Egypt in the year 1798. He would stay there for three years,

each of which would be characterized by a fierce struggle and a harsh and bitter battle between the people and the occupying aggressors. They opposed his politics vehemently and resisted his campaign with successive uprisings, during which many lives and blood were sacrificed. The result of this fearless resistance resulted in the growth of nationalism and deep feelings about their legitimate rights in governing their country (Ḍaif 1974: 12). It will later be shown how this phenomenon of nationalism would impact on the development of literature in general and of prose in particular. When the French eventually departed and the Ottomans continued their rule, the Egyptians saw it fit to choose a new leader in the person of Muḥammad `Alī (whose role will be explored in greater depth below).

### 1.1.3 The Beneficial Effects of the French Campaign

The French campaign was the single most important reason for the revolution in the different aspects of life in Egypt during the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries (Būqarī 1979: 7). The arrival of Napoleon was the greatest event in the history of Egypt since the rule of the Ottoman Empire (Ḍaif 1974: 11). During the campaign the Egyptian people became aware of some aspects of European life. They noticed that the Europeans led their material life in a fashion distinctly different from theirs, whether in their eating and drinking or recreational life or in the way that they conducted their dance, singing or music parties. They observed the way the Western woman dressed, how she carried herself in public and how she rode the horse in a carefree and light-hearted manner (Ḍaif 1974: 12-13). They perceived what the Europeans had achieved with their progress in knowledge. Napoleon brought with him a group of capable specialists in History, Mathematics and the Natural Sciences who on arrival immediately established an Egyptian Science Society according to the French model. These scientists explored all parts of Egypt. The result was the production of nine volumes of information, entitled *Waḥf Miḥr* (A Description of Egypt) (1809 – 1825) and which formed the basis of a reference work on all aspects of Egypt (Ḍaif 1974: 13). Besides the Science Society, he also founded a laboratory (which concerned itself with practical research – something novel in Egypt at the time), a library (also non-existent in a formal way) and a printing press (which, too, was unknown in Egypt). Witnessing and experiencing these events made the Egyptians ponder about their own insignificant knowledge, and made them realize that there was another civilization with a culture and science which was worthwhile acquiring. They could sense that it was a type of knowledge,

art, lifestyle and civilization largely foreign to them, but from which they could gain tremendous benefit (Būqarī 1979: 7).

The French gave the Egyptians their first experience of a newspaper in the *Courier de l’Egypte* and their first glimpse of a scientific and literary magazine *La Decade Egyptienne* (Haywood 1971: 30). They saw the printing press and how Bonaparte printed his circulars, official papers and even books with Arabic letters. All of this was new to them. The printing press would have a profound effect on the advancement of literature as will be seen later.

#### 1.1.4 Muḥammad `Alī’s Contribution

Napoleon broke the power of the Mamelukes, and when the French left Egyptian soil and Muḥammad `Alī was chosen as viceroy, the people thought that they would start a new chapter in their lives as a free and striving nation. They aspired to individual freedom similar to that in France, and a democracy and constitution on the lines of Europe (Būqarī 1979: 9). Muḥammad `Alī, however, did not go the full distance as far as their aspirations and dreams were concerned. He withdrew and recoiled from those who had chosen him. Like Napoleon, he established a series of tribunals and treasuries which, unfortunately, denied the people their rights and thereby ended their hopes and aspirations to participate with him in governing their own affairs (Daif 1974: 14).

*Imam* Muḥammad `Abduh, in his reflections in *al-Mannār*, would later compare the rule of Muḥammad `Alī and his predecessors, the Mamelukes. Although both were oppressive, he preferred the latter because “their grip on the minds and freedom of the nation was not as tough and inflexible as that of `Alī, and therefore did not affect the Egyptian personality with weakness as did the tyranny of `Alī ... his only power was his army ... he was sly ... and would use his army and put opposite parties against each other ... to achieve his aims ...” (‘Akāwī 2001: 75).

Despite dashing the people’s political ambitions, he did plant the seeds of a ‘new’ life, a ‘new’ consciousness which would grow and spread gradually, producing its flowers and fruits in the not too distant future (Būqarī 1979: 10). `Alī’s main aim was to build a strong army for himself on the European style so that he could realize his dream of becoming a ‘grand emperor’. Everything he did in the fields of acquiring and dispensing of knowledge was geared towards this objective. Further, as Le Gassick puts it “The fact that the new autocrat was Albanian by birth, Turkish by education, and illiterate in Arabic until late in his rule precluded any possibility of his becoming an active patron of Arabic literature” (1979: 6). The significant side effect was that his efforts resulted in the establishment of a strong

connection between Egypt and Europe or between Egyptian intellectual life and European intellectual life (Daif 1974: 14). To realize his aims he had to request help in applying European methods and had to employ European teachers. Many who came at his invitation founded companies and schools. European literary figures visited Egypt and made use of its old and new history in their literature works. He was, therefore, the ‘stimulus from within’ Egypt, because “the mere presence of Europeans for a few years could not in itself lead to a literary revival” (Haywood 1971: 31).

Muḥammad `Alī is generally recognized as the first person to have opened the doors of Egypt to European civilization. This he did by importing European scientists, medical doctors and engineers (to assist in the training and maintenance of his army, of course) and by sending Egyptian student delegations to Europe. The individuals in these delegations were the messengers who brought Western thought and the European way of life to Egypt (Būqārī 1979: 8). “... he created a new environment, following the French occupation. He gave Egyptians something to write about, to feel strongly about, to feel proud of, instead of the sterile themes of the Age of Depression. A sense of purpose replaced the old torpor and sloth” (Haywood 1971: 34). This ‘Western’ experience made indelible marks on the Egyptians’ inner selves, as will be seen later in their literary works.

#### 1.1.5 The Beginning of the Growth of Nationalism

It was Muḥammad `Alī’s successors, Sa`īd and especially Ismā`īl, who would give the answer to the new spirit which prevailed in Egypt. At first the people were bewildered and awe-struck, in self-denial almost, but would gradually absorb the ‘new life’ through the efforts of Ismā`īl, who was well-known for bringing Egypt closer to Europe (Būqārī 1979: 7). He supported the ties with Europe by opening an opera house, the *Khidawī* (Khedivial) Library, increasing the number of primary and secondary schools, and opening a school for girls. Knowledge was acquired for the sake of knowledge, and teaching became an end in itself and not for the sake of an army, as was the case with `Alī (Daif 1974: 15 and 24). “Ismā`īl wanted to make Egypt ‘a piece of Europe’, and to give it a stamp of Western culture ...” (Qāsim 2001: 7)

A momentous event during Ismā`īl’s time was the opening of the Suez Canal. The results were pragmatic and clear: the physical distance between the lands of the East and the West was shortened significantly, as was the figurative distance between the people of the East and the West with respect to thought and culture. This was bound to happen, because

physical relations and intellectual relations are, after all, inter-related and intertwined. The barriers between East and West were slowly eroding. Politically, it would also have far reaching consequences, namely the occupation of Egypt by England (1882), which in turn would impact on the positive development in literature in Egypt (Ḍaif 1974: 15).

Ismā'īl established a parliament and a ministers' council and introduced many laws fashioned on the European models. This resulted in the growth of 'a tendency toward nationalism' (Ḍaif 1974: 15). During the time of `Alī and `Abbās the people led a very mechanical type of life, a life which had to satisfy `Alī, his family and the aristocrats of society (Turks). `Alī wasn't of Turkish descent, but an Albanian who painted himself and his family with a Turkish brush. He mostly printed books in Turkish at his Būlāq Printing House, and when he published the *al-Waqā'i` al-Miṣriyya* (Egyptian Official Gazette – the oldest known newspaper in Egypt) he distributed it in Turkish and Arabic. His administrative publications were purely Turkish (Ḍaif 1974: 16). In other words, there were no nationalistic and Egyptian tendencies in `Alī's deeds – in fact, he buried the people's political aspirations, as we have pointed out, in their infancy. But during the time of Sa'īd, and especially Ismā'īl, the small sparks of nationalism which were still flickering weakly were given the opportunity to flare up. The people's aspirations started to grow when he allowed the *falāḥīn* (peasants and farmers) to join the army and be promoted to high positions in the civil administration, people of the caliber of Rafā'a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (about whom will be learned more later), `Alī Mubārak, and Maṣmūd al-Falakī (Ḍaif 1974: 16). As *ra'yun`āmm* (public opinion) and nationalistic leanings grew further, and when Egyptian newspapers were published, they could, unlike before, criticize even the politics of Ismā'īl. The slogan of the papers became 'Egypt for Egyptians'. These nationalistic calls resulted in the army under Aḥmad `Urābī rebelling against the Circassian Turkish forces in 1882 during the rule of Taufīq would conspire with the English to subdue his people and would thereby entrench the occupier in his own land (Ḍaif 1974: 16). "...Taufīq was, after a period of his rule, no better than his father, Ismā'īl – alas, he was far worse. He turned his back on the national resistance and on the leaders of the reform movement ... things became worse, and the country was gripped by chaos; corruption spread in the administration, bribery was common, and subjugation and submission became the order of the day" (Qāsim 2001: 8).

A further four incidents which contributed to the advancement of Arabic literature during the reign of Ismā'īl can be identified (Būqarī 1979: 10):

1. The spread of knowledge and the mushrooming of newspapers and the concomitant conscious awareness that went with them;

2. The arrival in 1871 of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (the mentor of students like *Shaikh* Muḥammad `Abduh) who called for religious *iṣlāh* (reformation), the beneficial use of Western culture and knowledge in the cause of *Islām*, the emancipation from the interference of foreign powers in Islamic countries, and the rebellion against powers and rulers who assisted them;
3. The announcement of the *`Uthmānī* (Ottoman) constitution which focused the people's thoughts on their rights and the necessity of protecting them; and
4. The worsening debt situation and the interference of foreign countries in the internal affairs of Egypt.

More will be said about these events in their appropriate places.

#### 1.1.6 The English Occupation

With Taufiq abetting the occupiers, Egypt became submissive to the odious English. The country was ruled by English advisors and the ministries were run by Egyptians, the vast majority of whom were of Turkish origin. Even these ministers in the different ministries were controlled by English advisors and administrators. "For twenty years (1884 - 1904) outwardly Egypt remained submissive to the Khedivial dynasty, but its actual ruler was the British proconsul, Sir Evelyn Baring, who was later known as Lord Cromer ..." (Qāsim 2001: 8). Although the occupation was wretched, it could not suffocate the national movement against it. This nationalism was "sometimes Arabism (Pan-Arabism would be a better term), sometimes Islamic ... Frequently, however, it was more Egyptian, either specifically or by implication" (Haywood 1971: 80). The national movement grew stronger, especially under the leadership of Muḥammad Kāmil and due to the return to Egypt of the political exiles. Kāmil published the newspaper *al-Liwā`* (The Flag) in 1899 and used his fiery articles and sermons to stir up the people's feelings against the occupiers. He also founded the National Party (*al-Ḥizb al-Waḥdanī*) and traveled to all the European capitals, explaining the Egyptian issue and the invalidity of the English occupation. He is, without fear of contradiction, recognized as the 'leader of Egyptian nationalism' in his time (Ḍaif 1974: 206). His political essays in his newspaper were indicative of a new style and form of

literature which was developing, but more about this will be detailed later (under the development of the *maqāla*).

The English continued with their aggression, oppression, arrests and jailing, and tightened the noose of freedom around the people's necks until the outbreak of the First World War. After the war, the Egyptians rose up against the cruel occupiers for three continuous years (Ḍaif 1974: 17). The resistance and uprisings would continue until the English were forced to exit Egypt in 1936.

It must also be pointed out that during the occupation the English tried very hard to let their culture be dominant over that of the French and other European nationalities. This was done in three ways:

1. By making English the official language of the sciences and the medium of teaching.
2. Secondly, by sending student delegations exclusively to England.
3. Thirdly, various English religious delegations (Protestants and especially Catholics) visited Egypt and established many schools in Cairo, Alexandria, and other major centers.

The combination of these factors definitely affected the cultural and religious life of Egypt (Ḍaif 1974: 18).

The English missionaries were also very active in Syria and Lebanon where concerted efforts were made to convert Arabs to Christianity. Many Syrian and Lebanese Christians migrated to Egypt for economic reasons. According to Tāhā Ḥusain, the political conditions in *al-Shām* (since the time of Ismā'īl) resulted in many Lebanese and Syrian scientists emigrating to Egypt, making especially Cairo the hub of the Arab intellectual movement. Fleeing from oppression, they found in Cairo peace of mind and a place where they could give vent to their deepest feelings and inner thoughts literarily (Shayāmī 1995: 71). These *muhājirūn* (emigrants) would play a major role in Egyptian literature via the newspapers. Newspapers, as will be seen, had an unprecedented effect on the people's thought and psyche and the development of literature generally, and in the *maqāla* and *qāṣṣa* specifically.

The arrival of the English (1882) and their long occupation of Egypt (until 1936), did a lot of harm to the local economy, culture and history – the occupation was experienced as a



‘heavy nightmare’ (Būqārī 1979: 11) – but at the same time it also indirectly led to scientific and cultural progress and a stronger political awareness. It forced the Egyptians to find a way to vent their feelings (demanding, for example, their freedom and insisting on the occupiers to leave Egypt) against the occupation. They did this by secretly founding new newspapers and magazines (Būqārī 1979: 11). The pen would become a powerful weapon in the struggle: a light that expedited toil and nation building, a fuel for every uprising and revolution, and a revivifier of heedless and pessimistic hearts (‘Akāwī 2001: 6). This in turn would lead to new forms of literature like the legal *khiṭāba*, *maqāma*, *maqāla* and *qiṭāa*. We will examine these innovative forms in detail in their appropriate places.

## 1.2 European Intellectual Life and the Arab Heritage

### 1.2.1 Arab Intellectual Life

Since the nineteenth century two streams were flowing in Egyptian intellectual life: Arabic and Western (Ḍaif 1974: 22). The traditional, conservative Arabic trend was represented by *al-Azhar* and its teachings. It was *al-Azhar* which preserved Egypt’s Islamic and Arabic heritage during the severely testing rule of the Ottoman Empire when the schools established by the *al-Ayyūbī* and *al-Mamālīk* were closed down. The only light of knowledge which shone, albeit faintly, was that of *al-Azhar* (Ḍaif 1974: 19). The Ottomans not only extinguished the light of *Islām* (and together with it, its religious sciences) but also that of linguistic sciences, medicine and philosophy. Before the *Mamlūk* rule Egypt was capable of participating in the Islamic civilization, namely during the periods of Fatimid and *Ayyūbī* rule, and actually *did* start to contribute at the beginning of the *Mamlūk* period, as borne out by the works of al-Qalqashandī (*Subḥ al-A`shī*), al-Nuwairī (*Nihāya al-Arab*) and Ibn Manḥūr (*Lisān al-`Arab*).

When the Ottoman rule took root, intellectual activity in Egypt ceased, and the revival stagnated, the only writing being the *sharḥ* (commentary) of a *sharḥ*, and abridged versions of previous works, addenda or reports, thereby not adding any new knowledge. The ‘*ulamā*’ (learned scholars) became distanced from the books which were produced during the Abbasid period and even from those of the recent Mameluke period, very few being conversant with the works of the *imāms* like al-Shāfi‘ī or philosophers like al-Fārābi or social thinkers like Ibn Khaldūn. Writing and knowledge would resemble a puzzle. One learned person would write a *sharḥ* of a classical work, trying to solve some problematic issues in it; and then another would write a *shaḥr* of this *sharḥ*, endeavoring to clarify some unclear issues in that

*shar* (this was called *āshiya*). A third or fourth *shaikh* would then declare that this *shar* was not complete and then write an addendum to it (this was called a *taqrīr*) (Ḍaif 1974: 20). Books became voluminous but new knowledge was meager: there was a definite need for a drastic shake-up and movement to return to the fountains of Egyptian intellectual life of the previous periods.

That was as far as intellectual life was concerned. Literary life fared no better. The oppressive political environment shackled the flowering of literature and shackled the writers, failed to grant them their individual freedom and denied them their material comforts and welfare. As intellectual life collapsed so did literary life (Ḍaif 1974: 20). Nowhere was a writer or poet(ess) found who could gratify and delight the mind or the intellect. Literature became abridgements of previous works or rather imitations and boring reproductions of some old *qaḥidas*, only adding odious, forced *bad ī`* (metaphoric style) as if the aim of the *qaḥida* was only to adapt and apply types of *bad ī`*. Writing was thus generally faulty and the *saj`* (rhymed prose) weak and pallid. It did not convey real meaning because of the excessive use of shades of *bayān* (rhetoric) and intricate *badī`* (Ḍaif 1974: 21). *Saj`* was so prevalent that John Haywood and other orientalist regarded it as a third genre: “We usually divide literature into poetry and prose (*shī`r* and *nathr*). But in Arabic there is a third genre – or rather a subdivision of prose, *saj`* – rhymed prose. ... *saj`* (was) one important feature of ‘art prose’ (*al-nathr al-fannī*) – that is, prose in which sound mattered as much as sense, sometimes more” (1974: 3). Incidentally, *bad ī`* was “invented by Bashshar bin Burd (d. 783), a blind poet of Persian origin, and was adopted by a series of poets, ... who created ever more elaborate tropes describing wine and garden landscapes” (Bateson 1967: 2.332).

It merits mentioning that the men of religion (*‘ulamā`*) – especially in *al-Azhar* – initially objected to the use of the printing press, citing that the name of Allāh or His messenger or *Qur’anic* verses may be printed on material which may end up in unclean places or be thrown about carelessly (Būqarī 1979: 14).

### 1.2.2 European Intellectual Life

On the diametrically opposite side of the traditional and conservative trend of al-Azhar was the civil and refined European life which depended totally on European civilization and which was hitherto unknown to the Egyptians. During this time Europe was enjoying an active intellectual and literary life, a life which encompassed all walks of human thought about science, philosophy and literature. Their intellectual and ideational life advanced under the influence of the ancient pagan Greek heritage and Roman civilization.

They developed novel trends in literature, discovered the natural laws of physics and other non-physical laws of the universe which began to dominate the different facets of people's lives and which led to complete freedom of thought and a liberal way of life. A feature of this unrestricted freedom was the criticism of just about anything, whether of a religious or non-religious nature. They criticized ancient philosophy and established a new philosophy based on the ideas of Descartes (Ibn al-Husain would later be influenced in his critique of *jāhiliyya* [period of divine ignorance] poetry by Descartes's philosophy of 'doubt'), then progressed onto natural, physical and conventional knowledge, in fact to knowledge of humanity in its widest sense. They did all of this without severing their links with the philosophy of Greece and the laws of Rome.

Likewise the West progressed in their literary life, using the Greek and Roman heritage to create a novel literature very different to, independent of and just as wonderful as, that of the Middle Ages (the period of the Greek Homer and the Roman Virgil) (Daif 1974: 21-22). So, when Napoleon descended on Egypt, the people became aware that there was another side to life which was unknown to them, but from which they could derive multiple benefits - scientific, literary, and otherwise. The dreams of Muḥammad `Alī, as mentioned earlier, to establish an army on the model of the great European nations coincided with the arrival of the French occupiers. To realize his aims, he founded many schools (military and otherwise) and industrial and medical institutes, and imported European teachers to teach and provide him with all the necessary means. He sent student delegations (at the head of them Rafā`a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī – see below) to Europe, especially France. By exchanging literary works and ideas which expressed their respective spirit, atmosphere, mood and taste, a strong bond was established between Arab and European civilization (Daif 1974: 23). Ever since that time there existed two types of intellectual life in Egypt : the traditional, conservative type in *al-Azhar* (characterized, as mentioned before, by dryness, dullness, shortcomings and incompatibilities), and the civil and enlightened European type (characterized by the knowledge and culture which Europeans possessed and which the Egyptians were not yet acquainted with) (Daif 1974: 22).

### 1.2.3 The Two Streams Become One

European intellectual life (physical and non-physical) was transferred to Egypt, but during the first half of the nineteenth century no European literary life was absorbed by Egyptian society. The main reason was that the rulers did not show an interest in it, their only aim being to use European science and technology to bolster their own positions of power

and image. The other reason was more of a natural one: it is easy to teach and transfer knowledge (its rules and issues), but to transfer literature and the traditions which go with it, and for another nation to benefit fully from it, is very difficult unless there exist between the two nations clear, strong and mutual literary relations which can aid in this transfer, and which can facilitate the exchange in its literature which expresses its spirit, milieu, temperament, mood and taste (Ḍaif 1974: 23). So, because literature (in its widest sense) is dependent on these elements and factors, it was difficult for the Egyptian populace to taste Western literature and to also express it in their own literature during Egypt's intellectual revival at the time – for that needed a longer period of time and strenuous effort. A generation of Egyptian society had to blend and become part of Western literature and the Western spirit. This is where Muḥammad `Alī's sending of student delegations to Europe and the role of the student Rafā`a al-Ṭahāwī played a significant role.

Al-Ṭahāwī and a group of Egyptian youth mixed with Europeans, reading and studying Western literature, and thereby reaping and tasting the full benefits of true art. They returned to their homeland and participated in the movement to translate Western sciences which were taught in Egyptian schools so that the Egyptians could know and apply these sciences. `Alī chose al-Ṭahāwī to supervise these efforts in the school *al-ʿAlsun* which he specifically founded for translations (1842).

These (mainly scientific) translations continued through the period of Sa`īd. When Isma`īl came to power, Egypt took giant strides towards mixing with European civilization. Everything began to take on a European flavor. Politically and constitutionally, Egypt adopted the representative parliamentary and judicial system similar to that of France. Educationally, various schools of higher learning were established, primary and secondary schools were founded, and even a school for girls came into being. Egypt entered a 'new civilization' phase (Ḍaif 1974: 25). It widened its cultural panorama tremendously by establishing the opera, acting groups and theatrical plays. This indicated that Egypt had begun to culturally transform itself. The connection was further strengthened when the Suez canal opened, for the Europeans could then easily send delegations who founded various companies, schools and banks, and the Egyptians could send increasingly more exchange students to Europe to study Western culture which enabled them to enjoy and to gain control over their lives, and then to return, armed with European civilization.

`Alī Mubārak founded a school *Dār al-`Ulūm* with the specific aim of reviving and simplifying the teaching of Arabic. This was after it was found that the Arabic in use had become stagnant and weak (the use of *saj`* and *bad ī`* being the mode), unable to carry the translations of composed works of European culture, and that *al-Azhar* (the custodians of

Arabic) was not playing, or was not able to play, its role in the new movement. The school succeeded in its aims to make Arabic fit and appropriate to carry and convey the Western intellectual works and feelings clearly and unambiguously. It helped make the language more flexible to accommodate the expression of Western ideas and to sketch Western feelings. In other words, it filled a huge gap in bringing the literary tastes of Europe closer to the literary tastes of the Arabs.

Schools (together with universities) are considered to be the second most important cultural means after the press which, directly and indirectly, influenced the Egyptian *uqṣūṣa* (short story) (Būqarī 1979: 15). Schools, through their great increase in number, gave a large proportion of students the opportunity to discover and study Western literature. Two types of schools to this effect were identified:

1. Foreign (French, English and American ) schools which really played a major role in the advancement of the *uqṣūṣa*, and
2. National schools which offered language courses in English, French and Italian (Būqarī 1979: 15).

In this regard one must also not forget the role which the delegations of students, whom Muḥammad `Alī had sent to Europe, played. These individuals drank from the various fountains of European knowledge and on returning, spread this knowledge in the schools amongst their equally thirsty students (Būqarī 1979: 16). Many Europeans also came to Egypt (as was mentioned under the discussion of the Suez Canal), founding companies and schools, and thereby cementing intellectual and literary ties between the Egyptian people and Europe. There is no doubt that these schools and delegations affected Egyptian life and thought profoundly as they gave the people the opportunity to be exposed to different types of Western literature (Ḍaif 1974: 15-16).

During the last third of the nineteenth century groups of Lebanese and Syrians who had qualified in *al-yasu`iyyīn* (Jesuite) schools and various American and European religious missionary institutes, migrated to Egypt – some to escape the oppression of the odious Ottoman rule and others in search of a liveable income. They had actually taken an interest in Western literature in their respective countries before the Egyptians because of the religious missionaries who taught them. Their connection to Western literature was thus much stronger than that of the Egyptians during that time. They revived newspapers in the most excellent ways and brought the best of Western theatrical plays with them, thereby

strengthening and consolidating the Egyptians' movement towards European literature.

Both the *muhājirūn* and the Egyptians then worked together in this new field, namely the translation of European literature in its widest sense. The Egyptians would translate Molière and others, and the *muhājirūn* would translate Kourni, Shakespeare and 'The Iliad' of Homer. The translation of Western plays and short stories increased until they reached the hundreds. These translated and Arabicized stories changed the tastes of the populace, without a shadow of doubt, and tied them to European literature. These activities continued despite the English occupation thereafter. In 1908 the University of Egypt was founded due to generous donations, and lectures in literature, history and philosophy were given by both Egyptian professors and European orientalists of the caliber of Juwaidi and Nallino (Ḍaif 1974: 26). The establishment of the university must be seen in the light of "the attempts to liberate the individual and the society, and thereby granting him cultural freedom and ridding him of the limitations which the prevalent educational system wove around him" (Qāsim 2001: 14). The orientalists influenced and earned the respect of numerous students who would later become prominent men of letters. Tāhā Ḥusain, for example said, "It was Nallino who taught me, and I'm grateful to him for my learning; he taught me the history of literature, and his lessons were given in the classical Arabic, very unlike in other institutes, for instance the *al-Azhar* ..." (Al-Dasūqī 2002: 84).

This means that Egypt's intellectual life was greatly transformed, for the educated did not study Western sciences and literature in order to establish an army or to create an aristocratic class or to train teachers to teach language in schools (compared to the time of Muḥammad `Alī and his immediate successors), but they acquired them for the sake of knowledge and literature in themselves. The principle intent and endeavor was to research freely and in an enjoyable way, a way which transcended the insipid and mediocre aims of the government and daily routine. This positive spirit spread to all institutes of learning and even to the Ministry of Education (Ḍaif 1974: 26). In this way the university students (the likes of Aḥmad Bek Luḥfī al-Sayyid, Ḥāhā Ḥusain and Ibrāhīm al-Māzinī – about whom will be written more later on) and others scaled the walls of European civilization and culture, thereby acquiring for themselves and for their country the literary and intellectual treasures they had always yearned and strived for.

When the University of Egypt came under the auspices of the government in 1925, it expanded to include Departments of Literature, Medicine, Science, Law, Engineering, Agriculture, Business, Medicine and Veterinary Science, with both Egyptian and Western lecturers making up its staff (Ḍaif 1974: 27). Soon Egypt would have its own adepts and specialists in all branches of knowledge, and its own literature experts, writers and critics

proficient in both ancient and modern Western literature (Ḍaif 1974:28). The role of universities (together with schools) was, as stated before, the second most important cultural means after the press which, directly and indirectly, affected the development and advancement of science and literature in Egypt (Būqarī 1979: 17).

So, since the middle of the nineteenth century, Egypt had experienced a monumental revival and growth in its literature for no other reason than that the two cultural trends (Arabic and Western), which had begun separately during the earlier periods, united to become one (Ḍaif 1974: 28). Even those writers like Muḥḥafā Luḥfī al-Manfalūḥī and Muḥḥafā Ṣādiq al-Rāfi`ī who had leanings towards the 'old' traditional, conservative Arabic past equipped and empowered themselves with translated Western literature. They could use it to fashion their own subject matter and style in a way which suited and was appreciated by their fellow citizens. They realized that a public literary opinion, which required new models which suited the new times and life, had been born. They had to adapt to the times so that the real beauty and enjoyment of literature could be experienced. That is why al-Manfalūḥī made use of translations or stories translated for him, for writing short stories like *Magdalene*, *Fī Sabīl al-Tāj*, *al-Shā`ir*, *al-Faḥīla*, and so on. More than that, some of the conservative Azharites who followed the old Arabic school and its models began to demand and learn foreign languages until they, too, could get a new picture of Western literature and participate in this new, novel and exciting sphere.

The two cultures therefore became firmly joined together like never before. People began to enjoy this new civilization like they would enjoy water and air. It not only spread to surrounding villages, but also descended in its streets and between its walls. The term 'Western civilization' had become a misnomer because it was welded together with the Arabic heritage, thereby creating one intellectual life and one literary life.

Translations became fully organized and structured, supervised by various societies like 'The Committee for Writing, Translating and Distribution' and properly regulated by the government. Not only French and English works were translated, but also literary sources from the German, Italian and Russian languages. The result was the birth of an 'Egyptian humanities', led and inspired by Shauqī, Shukrī, al-`Aqqād, al-Māzinī, Luḥfī al-Sayyid, ḥāḥa ḥusain, Haikal, Taufīq al- ḥakīm and others who produced and originated this literature. 'This literature did not stop at the borders of the Egyptian environment and its past heritage, nor at the Western environment and its ancient and modern heritage, but (it) expanded this environment to become a grand environment of humanities, spreading its lofty, exalted ideals and designs of real, true literature – the ideals of truth, goodness and beauty' (Ḍaif 1974: 29).

A word about the role of societies and academies would be appropriate here. They can be regarded as the ‘third most important cultural means’ after the press and the schools which gave impetus to literature in general and the new forms of literature in particular (Būqārī 1979: 17). The literature and science academies/societies founded at the time could be divided into two:

1. Foreign societies, whose major concerns were scientific and which, therefore, have no direct bearing on our discussion, and
2. Arabic societies, which were numerous, some playing a greater role than others and having varying degrees of effect on the general life and culture (in particular) of the masses.

Some of them, for example, were founded with the explicit aim of reprinting and distributing the classics of old, in the fields of history and *fiqh* (Islamic law). As such, it participated in the revival movement which would lead to the appearance of the *maqāma* which would in turn lead to the development of the modern *uqūba*. *Shaikh* Muḥammad `Abduh (see later under al-Manfalūṭī's social connections) also played a significant role in the establishment of these societies. He produced two books *Asrār al-Balāgha* and *Dalā'il al-Ijāz* and published *al-Mukhaṭṭas* by Ibn Sayyida in seventeen parts (Būqārī 1979: 17). This rediscovery of Arab and Islamic heritage would, as explained elsewhere, form one of the great pillars of and plant the seeds for the birth of a new writing style and ‘people’s literature’, amongst others.

### 1.3 The Printing Press and Newspapers

This topic will be dwelled upon for some time because it generated and precipitated such a wide and deep change in Arabic literature. Amongst others, it created a ‘new literature’ (namely, the Arabic essay and short story) which was hitherto unknown to Egyptians. It helped to originate a ‘new writing style’ and it made Arabic literature more, or even fully, ‘people-centered.’ There were four cultural means which influenced literature and the short story in particular. It would be no exaggeration to say that the most important one was the printing press (Būqārī 1979: 12). It is only when one looks at these various means that one can really understand the extent to which the printing press and newspapers affected both the intellectual and literary life of the Egyptian people. The space devoted to this factor



will not appear excessive if it is seen in this light.

### 1.3.1 The Discovery of the Press

As previously mentioned, Egypt did not know about the printing press until the arrival of Bonaparte who brought it with him to print his official documents and circulars. Europe had known about its value since the fifteenth century (orientalists used to print Arabic books with it), Turkey used it during the seventeenth century and Syria imported it during the following century. Muḥammad `Alī founded the famous Būlāq Press and published the newspaper *al-Waqā'i` al-Miṣriyya*, and various Arabic and Turkish books and collections of poems of the Abbasid period. When works from the likes of Ibn al-Muqaffa' [d. 760] (*Kalīla wa Dimna*, based on the Sanskrit *Fables of Bidpai*), al-Jāḥiẓ ('Amr ibn Baḥr, *Book of Animals*) [d. 869], Ibn Khaldūn [d. 1406] (*al-Muqaddima*, The Prolegomena), al-Mutanabbī and others were printed, those concerned with culture and education discovered new methods in style, namely prose which was easy and relaxed, free of formality, artificiality and imitation, and poetry models which were simple and without intricate metaphors and inconvenient structure (Ḍaif 1974: 30). *Al-Muqaddima* is, of course, the magnificent theory of history propounding "group cohesiveness which gave the nomads their advantage in a cyclic struggle with dynasties following an internal law of decay" (Bateson 1967: 2.34). In the 'old' literature and style an Arabic which was clear and easy, able to carry scientific thought and exquisite and delicate literature was discovered. This was in contrast to the writing style then in vogue which was characterized by *saj`*, artificiality and forcedness, enigma and obscurity.

In addition, translations of Western works were printed, becoming easily available to all and sundry. It was the combination of these two extremes, namely ancient Arabic books and translated European literature that led to the reawakening and revival of Egyptian thought and its spread during the nineteenth and ensuing century (Ḍaif 1974: 31). The reprinting of the Islamic and Arabic heritage was a powerful indication of the revival of the nation because a revival was in most cases characterized by the reproducing and regeneration of ancient heritage (Būqarī 1979: 12). H.A.R.Gibb reiterated, "During the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, the Egyptian press was the theatre in which literary reputations were made and literary Arabic adapted to modern themes" (1963: 160).

Naturally, there was much resistance from the 'conservatives', the trustees of the old Arabic culture (in especially the *al-Azhar* institution), and a struggle between them and the 'innovators' (*mujaddidīn*) of this 'new' movement (combining ancient Arabic / modern

Western thought and language) ensued (Daif 1974: 31).

### 1.3.2 Literature before the Introduction of the Press

A brief glimpse at how literature was spread before the coming of the printing press would shed light on how important a role it played in the awakening of the Egyptian mind during the previous century and directing it towards new models in language and thought. Writers used to depend on scribing by hand which was a very expensive venture. Consequently few people could afford to buy books. Books on knowledge and literature from the previous centuries were thus very limited and confined to a certain social circle (the aristocracy). The result was that the general population remained largely ignorant of cultural and scientific issues.

### 1.3.3 The Effects of the Press

When the printing press was used, thousands of copies of a book could be printed and then distributed. Large numbers of people could thus obtain it and benefit from it because, firstly, it was more readily available and, secondly, it was affordable. Thoughts and ideas about art, science and literature could be exchanged by most of the general population and not by a certain clique only. Libraries were established (in the form of houses and shops) where people could read the books they could not afford to buy. In 1870 `Alī Mubārak founded the Egyptian Library, furnishing it with thousands of books on science, art and literature, not only in Arabic, but in different European languages. The people would visit it during specified times day and night, reading and studying. This library became a ‘university of the people’. In this way the printing press helped in stamping out ignorance and illiteracy. Put in another way, it obliterated the ‘aristocracy’ of literature and science, making the attainment of knowledge ‘democratic’ and the right of every individual (Daif 1974: 32).

The occupation was thus a factor working for the literary renaissance. On this point, Haywood quotes an Arab author, Salahiddine Boustany, who had no doubts that: “Had it not been for the press of Bonaparte, Muḥammad `Alī would have been unable to start Boulaq Press, and consequently Al Waqae’ el-Mesriyyah, as early as 1828” (Haywood 1971: 31). The French showed Egyptians the potential of the press, thereby opening their eyes French culture and European sciences, and making them receptive to foreign ideas. “It was a first step towards ending the literary inbreeding which had long stultified Arab literary development” (Haywood 1971: 31).

#### 1.3.4 Libraries

After the press, schools, and societies / academies, the establishment of libraries or book storehouses, whether general, private or for government agencies, was the most important cultural means in the advancement of Arabic literature (Būqarī 1979: 18). Libraries were not new to the Arabs as they were present during the flourishing and progressive ‘golden period’ of the Islamic civilization in *Shām*, Egypt and *al-Andalus* (Spain). The number of volumes reached hundreds of thousands and even a million in some instances, but ‘incidents which happened in the Arabic and Islamic world at the time led to the destruction and disappearance’ of many of the books until this revival occurred when the books were taken out of their warehouses, reprinted anew, and general benefit could be derived from them by teachers and students of knowledge. The authorities also ensured that proper national libraries were built because they were alarmed and concerned that numerous valuable books were disappearing from schools, societies, mosques, universities and private libraries at the hands of the *mustashriqīn* (orientalists) who came to study Arabic and *Islām* and took these rare books with them to the West. Thus, just like the previous ones, libraries rendered a great service to the culture, and participated in giving a large number of citizens the opportunity to read and study, thereby significantly influencing their lives in general (Būqarī 1979: 18-19).

#### 1.3.5 The Improvement of Transport

The development of better and improved transport helped the printing press in this ‘democratization’ of knowledge. It brought the writer nearer to the reader and the readers closer to one another. Earlier the means of transport were difficult and very slow, the camel and horse being the only means. If a writer would write a book in Cairo, very seldom would a resident of Alexandria know about it, except after months, or even years, had passed. Can we imagine how long it would take to reach the people when a book was published in Baghdad or when an Orientalist would issue a book in Arabic in Europe? Later, with land, air and sea transport being developed and available, a book compiled in Iraq or Europe could reach Cairo within days or even hours. In this way an age of cultural exchange in its widest sense had dawned, not only between Egypt and Europe, but between Europe and the whole Arab world, and even within the Arab world itself. The printing press, and the resultant spread and availability of Arabic and translated Western literature, made a tremendous impact on Egyptian literary life; the least that can be said is that it expanded the circle of culture to its

widest perimeter.

The press, besides the printing and distribution of books, also made the publishing and distribution of newspapers for the different levels of society easily available. Europe used newspapers to its fullest extent since the seventeenth century, helping to create a 'public opinion' within its societies. Their peoples could express their feelings for or against their respective governments. It, for example, helped to a large extent in the outbreak of the French revolution when the French masses rose up against the French royal aristocrats.

### 1.3.6 The Publication of the First Newspapers and Magazines

When the French under Napoleon occupied Egypt and introduced the press, the first papers to be published were *al-`Ashār al-Miqrī* (The Egyptian Decade) and *Barīd Miqrī* (The Egyptian Post). They were, however, printed in French, thus having no effect on the Egyptians. When Muḥammad `Alī came to power, he issued the *Jurnāl al- Khidawī* (The Khedivial Journal) which, in 1828, was changed to *al-Waqā'i` al-Miqrī* (The Egyptian Gazette). This paper was first published in Arabic and Turkish and when Rafā'a al-Taḥṭāwī became its editor, it was published only in Arabic. It contained government news and some literary contributions but, being an official governmental organ, it did not generate a 'public opinion' among the people (Ḍaif 1974: 33-34).

Later, in Ismā'īl's time, a magazine *Rauḥa al-Madāris* (Garden of Schools), which had as its two aims the revival of Arabic literature and the spread of modern Western knowledge and thought, was also edited by al-Taḥṭāwī. Many writers and scientists helped him in this effort to publish novel and original research in science and literature in all their different branches. It was only then that a type of 'public opinion' started to take shape.

Many newspapers contributed to the growth of a movement which would result in Egyptian nationalism. This nationalist movement and the 'public opinion' would turn the tide against Ismā'īl, exposing his corrupt rule (Ḍaif 1974: 34). *Wādī al-Nīl* (The Nile Valley) by `Abd Allāh Abū al-Sa`ūd, *Nuzha al-Afkār* (Recreational Meditations) by Muḥammad `Uthmān Jalāl and Ibrāhīm al-Muwailaḥī, and *al-Tankīt wa al-Tabkīt* (literally 'Jest and Reproach') and its sister paper *al-Ṭā'if* (Wandering Rover) by `Abd Allāh al-Nadīm fiercely criticized the politics of Ismā'īl which threatened to destroy Egypt. Before that *Abū Naḥḥāra* (literally 'Father of the Telescope'), issued by Ya`qūb Ṣunū` and the first political newspaper of comedy and humor in Egypt, bitterly criticized Ismā'īl and his oppressive rule (Ḍaif 1974: 34).

During this time, the *muhājirūn* who were mentioned earlier on played a powerful

role in the origination of ‘people’s journalism’. They expressed similar political and nationalist feelings as the Egyptians in their papers, for example Adīb Isḡāq (about whom we shall hear more about later under ‘The Development of the Essay’) would write in his paper *Miḡr* (Egypt) about the desires of the Egyptians for social and religious reformation, and would even support *Shaikh* Muḡammad ‘Abduh and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (about whom more will be written under al-Manfalūḡī’s ‘Social Connections’) on Islamic issues. Other papers which they founded were *al-Ahrām* (The Pyramids) and *al-Muqattim* (the name of a range of hills east of Cairo) (Ḍaif 1974: 35). A difference between the muḡajirun and writers with a more religious leaning (like Jurjī Zaidān, who, as will be mentioned in 3.4.9, used the *qiḡā* to teach Islamic history) was that the *muḡajirūn* “presented the narrative and short story as a means to transplant Western sciences and ideas into an Egyptian environment ... to bring the opinions and beliefs of Western culture to the Egyptian consciousness” (Qāsim 2001: 14).

When the English occupied Egypt, they closed down most of these papers and, but for the strong feelings of nationalism and the growing nationalist movement, would have succeeded in subjugating the Egyptian people. *Shaikh* ‘Alī Yūsuf (who influenced al-Manfalūḡī to a remarkable degree as will be seen later) started *al-Mu’ayyid* (The Corroborator) – for which al-Manfalūḡī would write his famous articles and essays, ‘Abd Allāh Nadīm (about whom more details will be given, too, under ‘The Essay’) started *al-Ustāth* (The Teacher) and the famous Muḡafā Kāmil (who would be recognized as the ‘leader of the Egyptian nationalistic movement’) edited *al-Liwā’*. A group called *ḡizb al-Umma* (The Party of the Nation) took *al-Jarīda* (The Journal) as their mouth piece. These papers played a major role in the revolt against the occupiers (who were eventually forced to exit Egypt) and contributed significantly to the formation of an Egyptian constitution (*dustūr*), a parliament and diverse political parties. The English occupiers, under the leadership of Cromer, also gave the media in general and newspapers in particular, the unrestricted freedom to publish. There were strict censorship laws in place, but Cromer neglected to implement them. The result was that the different political parties which sprang up could publish their ideas and policies without having to apply for special permission (Būqārī 1979: 13).

Together with the above-mentioned papers various magazines (weekly and monthly) saw the light of day. The most important were *al-Muqtaḡif* (The Gatherer or The Choice) (founded by the *muḡajirūn* who issued the newspaper *al-Muqattim*), *al-Hilāl* (The Crescent), *al-Siyāsa al-Uḡbū’iyya* (The Politics Weekly), *al-Balāgh al-Uḡbū’ī* (The Communique Weekly), *al-Kātib al-Miḡrī* (The Egyptian Journalist), *al-Kātib* (The

Journalist), *al-Risāla* (The Message) and *al-Thaqāfa* (Culture). These magazines published a series of long articles about science and literature (Arabic and Western), while magazines from different university departments published research findings in their respective specializations (Ḍaif 1974: 35).

Thus, the importance of all of the above is that these newspapers and magazines encompassed and dealt with topics (social, political, economic, scientific and philosophical) which the previous *saj`* literature never touched on, thereby filling a gap by linking Arabic literature with Europe and making literature more humanistic and ‘people-centered’ (Ḍaif 1974: 35). They greatly broadened the sphere for a great number of Western stories which served as models for Arab writers (Būqarī 1979: 13). They helped create new forms of literature, namely the *maqāla* (essay) and *qiṣṣa* (short story) which were unknown in Egypt.

### 1.3.7 The Simplification of Writing Styles

The newspapers caused another phenomenon, no less in value than the above: the simplification of writing style through the avoidance of *saj`* and *bad ī`*. The *saj`* and intricacies of the *bad ī`* may have been acceptable during the previous periods when literature addressed only a specific environment and class (the aristocracy), but times had changed and the press had to address the new generations not used to these intricacies, but who preferred simplicity and clearness in style. The writers were thus forced to change their old style of *saj`* and *bad ī`* to a more natural and simple style so that the people could understand their works without any difficulty. This new direction actually gave the writers a wider flexibility – they could express their minds freely, without being tied to the chains of forced *saj`* and different shades of artificial *badī`* (Ḍaif 1974: 36)

### 1.3.8 The ‘Socialization’ of Literature

Another important result of the ‘new’ press was that literature became ‘social’ in its widest sense: literature no more addressed only the individual, nor was it neglectful of the people’s wishes, desires and needs in the same way as in the past – it came to address the populace directly, and it became concerned about its society and its real feelings and sensibilities (Ḍaif 1974: 36). It no longer tried to satisfy or win the favor of kings and princes, but tried to satisfy the masses and win their love, approval and satisfaction. They after all depended, too, on the people for their sustenance and, by implication, for their survival.

This focus of the newspapers and magazines on the general public and the issues

which concerned them spread to prose and poetry, and thus made literature ‘people’s literature’ or ‘social’ in its fullest sense.

More discussion on the role of the press and newspapers will follow in section 2.2.4 where it will be seen how this factor played a major role in the birth of a public literary opinion and nationalism, the democratization of literature, the reformation of Egyptian society, the resurrection of Arabic and Islamic *turāth*, and the birth of new literature forms.

An interesting phenomenon reared its head: some writers actually went to the other extreme – in order to satisfy the people’s taste and to receive their approval they would oversimplify their style to a banal and trite level. A contributory factor to this unfortunate trend was the speed at which they had to write, having to complete a piece of writing in a few hours. They would thus not concentrate on quality or good style and would not grant their articles its beauty, charm and artistic dues. On the other hand, there were many writers who always tried to strike a balance between speed, style, quality and the taste and level of the people. Some of them did not descend to the level of the people, but rather tried to write in such a way (using a firm, composed style and words rich in meaning) that the level and taste of the people could be raised (Daif 1974: 37).

The historical facts before the revival of Arabic literature, the Napoleon campaign (with the resulting influence of the West), the printing press and later the English occupation thus played major roles in the preparation of a revolution in not only the political and economic life of Egyptians, but also in their literary life, and had a profound influence on the general development of prose as will be seen in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The General Development of Arabic Prose**

The focus here will be on the general development of Arabic prose from 1850 onwards. The struggle to free Arabic literature from the chains and shackles of metaphorical style and rhymed prose will be discussed. Simultaneously, light will be shed on the battle between the ‘modern’ thinkers whose aim was to save the language from degeneration and impoverishment and the ‘conservatives’ or ‘traditionalists’ who wanted to maintain the status quo. The concomitant results of this struggle (the birth of a public opinion, revival of the Arabic and Islamic literary heritage, the substantial influence of the West via translations, the ‘democratization’ of literature, freedom of speech and the birth of a public literary opinion) are then detailed. Thereafter, the new forms of literature (essay and short story) and the profound role of translations, the Syrian-Lebanese migrants and journalism (and how they led to the West and Arab East becoming one), will be dealt with.

#### **2.1 The Chains and Shackles of *Badi`* and *Saj`***

##### **2.1.1 The Attempts to Connect with the West**

As described before, the Napoleon campaign initiated a new life for the Egyptians, politically, socially and in the field of the natural sciences. Since the time of Muḥammad `Alī did the Egyptians try to connect to the material and social aspects of Western civilization. They came to perceive that over the Mediterranean Sea there was another type of life, a life which they should embrace in all its aspects. Although Muḥammad `Alī did not live up to the people’s expectations, he did, by means of his military, medical, engineering and industrial schools fashioned on the Western model and with its Western teachers, and the student exchange programme during which the students learned foreign languages, plant the seeds for this intellectual connection to the West to materialise in the not so distant future at the time.

Initially, however, this connection fell far short from an applied science and arts perspective. As for literature, no real connection literally existed. The reason for this was, of course, that a nation’s literature is not affected by another nation’s literature solely because contact was made. It takes time, generations, until a nation is able to absorb from another



nation, to digest what it took, to assimilate it, and then to produce a new literature with its own stamp and character (Dāif 1974: 169-70).

### 2.1.2 The Continuation of *Saj`* and *Badī`*

The above fact is one reason why Egyptian literature became stagnant during the first half of the nineteenth century. Literature and literary taste became locked in the past when the use of *saj`* and *badī`* was prevalent. This straining after effect was not surprising because, as Haywood puts it, “medieval Arabic literature was intended largely for reading aloud” (1971: 11). The writers were not only caught up in the writing style of *saj`*, but would add the chains of *jinās* (a rhetoric device = assonance) and *ibāq* (the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas) to it (Dāif 1974: 170). According to Tāhā Ḥusain, the reason why Arabic prose at the beginning of the nineteenth century was weak, degenerate and void of salubrious meaning was that the period was an era of powerlessness and vulnerability and an imitatory intellectual, philosophical and scientific life (Shayāmī 1995: 69). In his research of Abū al-`Alā, he noticed that literature in Egypt was taught according to the methods of the predecessors as represented in the teachings of *Shaikh* Sayyid al-Mursafī who explained to his students in the Azhar *Diwān al-Hammāsa* of Abū Tamām or *al-Kāmil* of al-Mubarrad or *al-Amālī* of Abū `Alī al-Qālī with their emphasis on criticism, grammar, conjugations and eloquent rhetoric. Arabic was not taught in Egyptian law schools, institutes of science and all secondary schools, but rather some ‘strange language’ which had no relation between this language and life and which had no relation between it and the mind, feelings and sensibilities of the student (Ḥāhā Ḥusain 2005: 7 & 13).

Another major reason for the literary stagnation could be that Egypt at that time did not have real feelings of nationalism and therefore was not proud of itself as a nation; on the contrary, Muḥammad `Alī was bent on suppressing these feelings. This was evident in the fact that he appointed Turks to high positions and never allowed Egyptians to occupy them. Not only that, he would rule them highhandedly and autocratically, allowing no *shūrā* (mutual consultation) or anything which resembled *shūrā*. In addition, he would prefer the Turkish language to Arabic in his tribunals, circulars and even printed books. The students in his military schools also spoke in a disgraceful and shameful way about Arabic amongst themselves. Dāif relates a story by *Shaikh* Mahdī as to how far the students went to chastise and castigate a student: they, for example, put an *uqla* (a ‘knot’ placed in the mouth of a donkey when it is sheared) into a student’s mouth when he used the language of the Holy *Qur’ān* during a recess (1974: 170-71). In the absence of political and nationalistic

motivation for progress, the populace thus felt removed from the world, and their language remained backward, showing no signs of advancement. (Dāif 1974: 171).

### 2.1.3 The Revival of Egyptian Literature

It was, therefore, only natural that Arabic did not experience a revival and any growth at the time, and remained impervious to innovation, stagnant, confined, and laden with *saj`* and the chains of *badī`* of the previous period. Gradually a new, young generation which was proficient in foreign languages and their literatures and which could simultaneously read, understand and enjoy its taste, appeared. The best representative of this group would be the previously mentioned Rafā`a al-Ṭahāwī, an *al-Azhar* University graduate who led the first student delegation sent by Muḥammad `Alī to Europe. Paris was a revelation to him and al-Ṭahāwī did not confine himself to his official studies, but embarked upon studying the French language until he was proficient in it. For the next five years, he would read in French ancient history, Greek mythology, geography, arithmetic and logic. “He was particularly enthralled by the ideas of the European Enlightenment, whose rational vision he found very similar to *Falsafah*” (Armstrong 2004: 154). During his stay he described all aspects of the French way of life (material, social and political) in his diary. It was published before his return to Egypt as *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz fi Talkhīṣ Bārīz* (literally ‘Paris’s Résumé is [like] Refined Gold’). “It gives us a valuable early glimpse of the modern West as seen by an outsider” (Armstrong 2004: 154). The *Takhlīṣ* consisted of six main essays, each divided into chapters and “the grammatical style and vocabulary of the body of the work is remarkably unpretentious for an Azhar scholar of the time and the author clearly took pains to ensure accuracy of the information he gives. His approach is academic and neutral ...” (Le Gassick 1979:10). On his return he busied himself with translations. Muḥammad `Alī chose him as director of his school *al-ʿAlsun* (a Bureau of Translation, actually) where he, together with the students, started to translate various books from French. He was adamant that the Egyptian people must learn from the West, and that the Shariah must adapt to the modern world. Modern science should be no threat to *Islām*; Europeans had originally learned their science from the Muslims of Spain, so when they studied Western sciences the Arabs would simply be taking back what had originally belonged to them. “He was intoxicated by the promise of modernity; he wrote a poem in praise of the steam engine, and saw the Suez Canal and the transcontinental railways of the United States as engineering feats that would bring the far-flung peoples of the earth together in brotherhood and peace. Let French and British scientists

and engineers come and settle in Egypt! This could only accelerate the rate of progress” (Armstrong 2004: 155).

This was the beginning of the revival of Egyptian literature, and al-Ṭahāwī would be “considered a pioneer not only of the Nahda in general, and of translation in particular, but also of Arabic journalism” (Haywood 1971: 33). It was, however, an anxious and muddled beginning, for al-Ṭahāwī and his students still used *saj`* and *badī`* to convey the message of European literature. This was strange to a certain extent, because they read literature written in an easy and uncomplicated style, but then translated it into a difficult and intricate language, a language filled with severe artificiality and triteness, thereby rendering it incomprehensible, only understood with great difficulty (Dāif 1974: 171). Instead of addressing the reader directly, this literary style addressed the reader as if from behind a thick veil. It was obvious that it could not shrug off this veil because its use was widespread amongst all Egyptian writers. Writers coveted this style of expression in a fanatical manner – unable to express anything except by using it. It was as if their tongues were rigid and stiff, unable to turn away from it.

This was the state of literature during the first half of the nineteenth century – the writers possessing no means of literary expression, except for the narrow, constricted means of *saj`* and *badī`* which actually choked the language and which created a barrier between the people and the free expression of their needs. Literature was confined to this rigid, stagnant and artificial style of expression – the Western literary movement was as yet unable to emancipate it from the chains and shackles of *saj`* and *badī`* (Dāif 1974: 172).

## 2.2 The Movement to Free Literature from its Chains

### 2.2.1 The Birth of a Public Opinion and Nationalistic Thought

During the second half of the nineteenth century many significant impulses gathered to successfully loosen and free prose from its boring, sacred shackles. New inter-related events, which in turn interacted with other hidden affairs, occurred. These events consumed all aspects of the people’s lives and changed them drastically and completely.

The first major event was the simultaneous growth of public opinion, the idea of nationalism and the people’s awareness of their political rights that they were denied (Dāif 1974: 172). As mentioned previously, the Egyptians had an idea about these rights during the time of Muḥammad `Alī, but he, of course, tried to root it out. The fact that it remained hidden in the bosoms of the people all the while proved that his attempts were unsuccessful.

What kept it alive and made it grow, was the drafting of ordinary Egyptians into Muḥammad `Alī's army for, when that army was victorious in the war, the people felt proud to be Egyptian. Not only that, they started to participate in cultural exchanges between Egypt and Europe and, during these social interactions, noticed that European political life was diametrically opposite to theirs. The French people, for example, were not ruled by an autocratic dictator, but had participated with him in ruling and administering their country. The book by Rafā'a *Takhlīḥ al-Ibrīz fī Talkhīḥ Bārīz*, mentioned above, described the differences between political life in France and Egypt, and pointed out that France was ruled by a constitution which was designed and instituted by its people (Dāif 1974: 172-73).

What also made the Egyptians proud was the discovery of the Hieroglyphics which shed light on Egypt's glorious, ancient past. The people rightly felt honoured and proud, and justifiably yearned for a free, noble and decent life, having been denied this freedom and decency up to the period of Ismā'īl who squandered the country's wealth and who, like `Alī, appointed Turks ahead of Egyptians in high positions, whether in the army or elsewhere. It became crucial that the ruler and his close Turkish confidantes around him had to be removed (Dāif 1974: 173).

## 2.2.2 Going Back to the Roots : Arabic and Islamic *Turāth* (Heritage)

The Egyptians' concern as not confined to their country, but included the *dīn* (religion of *Islām*) and how weak and divided the Muslims had become. The West had colonised and occupied most Muslim countries, and the Islamic caliphate in Turkey was on the verge of collapse because of, amongst others, the interference of the West. The Egyptians fully realized that the only solution was to return to the original Islamic sources so that the *dīn* could be cleansed of the erroneous beliefs and superstitions that had crept into it. They wasted no time in studying these original sources and books written by Muslims during the Abbasid period. This was a major and important change because these sources were not studied in *al-Azhar* University at the time. Only the books of the immediate preceding periods were studied, books whose style was weak, complicated and artificial (Dāif 1974: 173). The people began to distinguish between 'old' and 'new': " When people used the name 'old' they meant everything which was related to the heritage of the *dīn*, traditions and customs; while they mean by 'new' everything novel and strange about Egypt's environment which was mostly derived from the Europeans" (Qāsim 2001: 10).

Simultaneously with this return to the rich Islamic heritage, there was a return to the original sources in Arabic literature. The press started to distribute ancient books, rare and

invaluable books like *Kalīla wa Dimna* by Ibn al-Muqaffa'. The educationists and writers saw in this old literature a new model for expression, and a style that differed remarkably from what they knew. There was no *saj`* and *badī`* in it; on the contrary, it had an easy and transparent style and a prose which could be understood without any difficulty. They thus demanded that writers must replace the style of *saj`* and *badī`* with the style of their Muslim predecessors, in both religion and literature (Dāif 1974: 173-74).

Tāhā Ḥusain (the *Shaikh* or 'grand old man' of Arabic literature) would later remark that prose developed, not only because the Arabs discovered Western knowledge and its modern philosophy, but also because they discovered, through the revival of the Arabic *turāth*, the treasures of the progressive, artistic prose which was known by their predecessors, especially of the first and second Abasid periods (Shayāmī 1995: 70).

### 2.2.3 The Formation of Bilateral Relations and Translations

#### 2.2.3.1 The Suez Canal

In the mean time, the Suez Canal was officially opened and the connection to the West would become stronger. Many foreigners descended on Egypt and the Egyptians could from amongst the midst of the Westerners get acquainted with the materialistic and economic world of Europe. This increased the Egyptians' pride in their selves and in their country for the interaction demonstrated to them that they had a role to play in the world and its economic relations. In turn, their intellect and taste were influenced because cultural relations are, after all, inter-related.

The relationship with the West was further strengthened during Ismā'īl's time by the opening of many schools and institutes of higher learning, establishing opera, and making bookstores available for reading. This all contributed to a phenomenal revival in Egypt, a revival that changed tastes and prepared the country for a substantial advancement in all literary fields. The driving force behind this revival was the Egyptians' new feelings and perceptions that beyond what they had read in religion and literature were models from their past which were fully worthy of imitating and following. So they embraced them wholeheartedly by reading and studying them, and by applying them in their intellectual and literary life (Dāif 1974: 174).

#### 2.2.3.2 The Syrian-Lebanese Connection and Translations

Going back to their literary roots was not the only movement which changed the people's taste and intellect. As mentioned previously, many Lebanese and Syrians came and settled in Cairo during the 1870s for political or economic reasons. They found that they had more freedom in Khedive Ismail's Cairo than in the Ottoman territories. They would play a pivotal role in Arabic literature because of their strong connection to European sciences and literature. They were profoundly influenced by the Catholic and Protestant missionaries and institutes (French and American) where they studied. As soon as they arrived in Egypt, they started to translate Western literary and science works and published articles on medicine, philosophy, politics, geography, history, industry, agriculture, ethics, and sociology, "bringing crucial modern ideas to the general Arab reader" (Armstrong 2004: 155-56). During the latter half of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth, Egypt became a vast field for translating Western literature. Short stories, narratives and innumerable books on sociology, law, economics and all branches of Western philosophy were translated.

Concerning this, H.A.R. Gibb commented: "... influential in transmitting the new ideas were a group of Lebanese scholars who were in contact with the western educational missions in Beirut. These men were also the creators of a new periodical press and a modern journalistic medium; these, transplanted to Egypt, at first still largely under Lebanese direction but soon followed by a vigorous native Egyptian production, proved to be the real forcing-bed of modern Arabic literature" (1963: 160).

These profuse translations forced the writers to abandon the *saj`* and *badī`* style of Rafā`a al-Ṭahāwī and his students. They noticed that he actually spoilt the meaning and feeling of what he wanted to convey to his readers. He was, of course, a product of his time, a time when everything had to be expressed through *saj`* and *badī`*. The translators after al-Ṭahāwī discovered a free and easy style to express Western European thought and meaning, and soon made it customary to write in this style. In addition to preferring the pure, classical style of the rich Arabic past to that of the heavy, confined style of Rafā`a, they began to make the style more flexible, adapting it to accommodate, suit and reflect the precise meaning of Western thought and feeling. It confirmed that classical Arabic was more than amply equipped to express this meaning and thought, thereby becoming a major and key factor in the revival of Arabic literature (Daif 1974: 175).

## 2.2.4 Freedom through the Press

### 2.2.4.1 The Democratization of Literature and the Freedom to Write

As previously mentioned, the press and newspapers played a significant role in the general revival of Egyptian literature. As far as freeing literature from the style of *saj'* and *badī'* specifically, its role was paramount and invaluable. Translators did not translate only for a highly cultured level of society, but for the general populace too. This was not the situation of translators during the Abbasid and previous periods. During those times they translated for a limited audience, the upper class of society. That meant that science and literature were 'aristocratic', monopolized by a small section of the nation. So, when the press was utilized and education spread to all levels of society, literature and science became national. The translators fully realized that they were not addressing the cultured, upper level of the nation only, but rather all levels of society.

This led to a substantial advancement in the style of translation and literary books. The translators and writers began to adapt their style to suit the different levels of society so that they could understand their writings without any difficulty. Henceforth, the literary style tended towards simplicity and the due consideration of the level of the people's understanding. Writers would strive to simplify and make their styles more straightforward so that their literature could circulate and sell well amongst the populace (Dāif 1974: 176). Thus, there was not only a return to the pure, classical style of old or to the free, natural and uncomplicated style of the predecessors, but the translators and writers also tried to simplify their style in a balanced way, not lowering it to a trite and banal level while at the same time not raising it to the extent which their readers would find difficult to read and understand. It was not only a plain and easy style, but also a pure, classical Arabic style.

What the newspapers did in this respect was, therefore, very profound and far reaching as they addressed the society as a whole and did not discriminate between the different levels of society; in fact, their concern for the lower class increased their concern for the higher class because the newspapers wanted to spread to as many of the public as possible, and to stimulate the populace to understand them, enjoy them, and consequently want and desire them.

Through this style the writers could, in one way, bring Western literature and culture to Egypt, and in another way, move away from the limited topics which prevailed in the preceding periods. In a nutshell, previous topics were very much about individuals and events. Literature (prose and poetry) would be about one or other victory or conquest, a description or commiseration of someone, or addressed to a specific prince or government official. Topics of general interest would replace these narrow and restricted topics, or, stated in another way, the nation would take the place of the individual. The writer would no longer aim his / her writings towards a particular person, but towards the whole nation, irrespective

of class or status. This meant that literature had become 'democratic' after being 'aristocratic', when it addressed and praised princes and officials in high positions to gain reward or to receive personal favours or to enable them to live a comfortable life. This period in Arabic prose had come to an end. The writers were no longer slaves to any specific individuals, whether in a high or low position. They regained their freedom – they could write as they wanted, not what any prince, minister or other government official wanted them to write. They could express their opinions and thoughts as they felt fit without being submissive and subservient to any person, important or not (Dāif 1974: 177-78).

#### 2.2.4.2 Public Literary Opinion and the Freedom of Political Expression

The fact that the writer changed into a writer for society at large, trying to satisfy its feelings and tastes, resulted in the growth of something else: a public 'literary opinion', whereby an individual could announce his / her pleasure and satisfaction or resentment and dissatisfaction about Egyptian literary life. Under the influence of this 'literary opinion' literature would advance and be emancipated from *saj`* and *badī`*.

Something even more profound than this, and with more far-reaching effects on Egyptian literature during the second half of the nineteenth century, appeared: the freedom of writers to express their political feelings and opinions. It is necessary to deal with this issue because it supplies the background for all the literature of the period as nearly every Arab writer of importance was concerned in one way or another with the political and social issues of the day, and his / her attitude towards them is reflected in his / her writings. Certain groups concerned themselves with society and its tendencies, political and otherwise, because these issues were important in their lives or the type of life which they aspired to. They wanted their political rights, rights which were wrested away from them during the periods of Ismā`īl and his predecessors. They longed for the reformation of society in all its forms. The most serious thing they grappled with was the *dīn*, its peoples, and the Ottoman Empire that had control over Egypt and many other Islamic countries.

The writers were swift in rallying to these important national issues. `Abd Allāh Abū al-Sa`ūd would publish the newspaper *Wādī al-Nīl*, and Ibrāhīm al-Muwailāhī would bring out issues of *Nuzha al-Afkār*. *Al-Waṭan* (The Nation) would see the light of day, and Adīb Isḥāq and Sālim Nuqāsh of the Lebanese-Syrian *muhājirūn* would publish *Miṣr*. Many other significant papers rolled off the press, amongst them *Abū Naṣṣāra* (Father of the Eyeglass) and *al-Tankīt wa al-Tabkīt* which was changed to *al-Ṭā`if* by `Abd Allāh Nadīm just before the uprising initiated by `Urābī.



These various papers described the Egyptians' political aspirations and called on the government for national reconciliation and reformation before the situation deteriorated. The Europeans entrusted the supervision of the country's finances to Ismā'īl and, as it is known, the control of finance leads to the control of its supervisor. The papers, therefore, started to vehemently criticize the leader and his foul politics, and soon a relentless uprising would break out (Dāif 1974: 178-79).

#### 2.2.5 The Need for *Iḥlāl* (Reformation)

Simultaneously with the blazing political feelings, strong emotions about *Iḥlāl* and the purification of the *dīn* from superstition and erroneous beliefs were running deeply through the people's hearts and souls. *Shaikh* Muḥammad 'Abduh was one of the first to take up this call, the call to save *Islām* and the Muslims from the backwardness and weakness which had overwhelmed them, to save his country from the tyranny of the rulers, and to remove the appalling social conditions which existed.

Undoubtedly, the man who strongly propelled *Shaikh* Muḥammad in this direction was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. The *Shaikh* used to frequent his house, going in the mornings and evenings to listen to his lectures on *dīn* and Islamic *falsafa* (philosophy). Jamāl al-Dīn would call for political, religious and social reform, inciting and provoking the feelings and minds against the rulers who betrayed the Islamic country's *amāna* (trust) by allowing the European colonisers to control Egypt's financial and other vital affairs. "Al-Afghānī, ..., did not fall in love with the British as Taṭawi had fallen under the spell of the Parisians. ... When he arrived in Cairo in 1871, he was a man with a mission. He was determined to teach the Muslim world to unite under the banner of *Islām* and to use religion to counter the threat of Western imperialism. It was only by reforming Islam and remaining true to their own unique cultural and religious traditions that the Muslim countries would become strong again and build their own version of scientific modernity" (Armstrong 2004: 156). It was not necessary to take on a European lifestyle in order to be modern. Muslims could do it their own way. Jamāl al-Dīn would train his students, with Muḥammad 'Abduh in the forefront, to give oratory speeches and to write *maqālāt* (essays and articles) in the newspapers. The talented and bright Muḥammad just about absorbed all of his mentor's religious, philosophical and political teachings. These teachings stirred a fiery zeal in his heart and soul to serve his *dīn* and country. He would also read Western sciences, Guizot, Tolstoy, Renan, Struass, and Herbert. He believed that Egypt's immense social problems could be rectified by means of education, and not by transplanting foreign political, social and educational

institutions wholesale into the country. "The vast mass of people simply could not understand the new legal system; its spirit and scope were quite alien to them" (Armstrong 204: 163). The way to spread his opinions about *al-lā* was paved for him when he received the opportunity to edit the paper *al-Waqā'i al-Miṣriyya* during the rule of Ṭaufīq. The *Shaikh* took part in the uprising known as the 'Urābī revolt' (after the army general who led it), and when it was crushed, he was banished for three years. He first left for Beirut and then moved on to Paris where he was preceded in exile by his *ustāth* Jamāl al-Dīn. In Paris the two of them published the paper *al-Urwā al-Wuthqā* (an expression taken from the *Qur'ān*, meaning 'The Strong Handhold') in which their topics would stir up a fiery Islamic fever in Egypt and the Islamic world. They believed in the necessity of uniting the Muslims under the flag of the Ottoman Caliphate until they could stand as one person against the colonising, odious, greedy Europeans.

These were the political, religious and social topics of writers during the rule of Ismā'īl and before the English occupation in 1882. They were general topics that the writers did not only take from their own, personal experiences, but also predominantly from the feelings and sensibilities of the people. The nation became everything, and their tendencies and preferences became the framework for the writing of various newspaper *maqālāt* (Dāif 1974: 179-80).

#### 2.2.6 The Flowering of Nationalism and the Creation of Fertile Literary Activity

Egypt was generally in a state of melancholy and the strong and forceful sparks of Islamic fervour temporarily subsided during the beginning stages of the occupation, but it would not take long for these sparks to reignite and regain its flames and power. *Shaikh* Muḥammad 'Abduh and 'Abd Allāh Nadīm (who both participated in the 'Urābī revolt) were unbanned. The paper *al-Mu'ayyid*, in which *Shaikh* 'Alī Yūsuf (about whom more details will be given under al-Manfalūṭ's social connections) expressed the nationalistic leanings of the people, appeared. 'Abd Allāh Nadīm treated the colonisers with hostility in his *al-Ustāth*. Muḥammad Kāmil would fiercely criticize colonization and the colonizers in *al-Liwā* and would start the *al-izb al-Waḥdanī* with which they strongly and vigorously struggled against the English. Luḥfī al-Sayyid edited the paper *al-Jarīda* that was the mouth piece of the *Ḥizb al-Umma*. This party differed from The National Party in that it was not in favour of a revolt, and followed a more moderate approach in the struggle. They were also responsible for the slogan 'Egypt for Egyptians' during the campaign against the colonizing English, and believed that Egyptians must not think of the Ottoman Caliphate or of the

Ottomans, but rather about themselves and their own welfare. Muḥammad Kāmil, on the other hand, was sympathetic towards the Islamic Caliphate because it was the symbol of the Egyptians' *Islām*, and believed that the loathsome English must be repelled from their country, by war if necessary. He rallied the country behind him, and declared war on the occupiers.

This nationalist movement, which originated from the heart and soul of the Egyptian nation, and the concomitant translation of Western literature that infiltrated their literary lives, resulted in fertile activity as far as the Arabic language and the topics covered, were concerned (Dāif 1974: 180). Thus “the two elements which are most productive of literary greatness: the quickening influence of a higher culture or the inspiration of a free and vigorous national life” could be discerned (R.A. Nicholson 1966: 443).

#### 2.2.7 The Language Debate : *Fuṣṣā* (Classical) vs. *ʿĀmmiyya* (Colloquial) and a New Writing Style

Language was largely freed from the hindrances of *sajʿ* and *badīʿ*, although some conservatives would still use them until late into the twentieth century. A new debate developed: the use of Egyptian colloquial Arabic instead of pure, classical Arabic. Those who favoured the use of *ʿāmmiyya* were predominantly from the Western-educated camp. They reasoned that the West used Latin in ancient times to express their thoughts and feelings, but then replaced it with their local languages, and used these languages to create their own, distinctive literatures. French and English were two excellent cases in point. They would argue that the classical language was not suitable to freely express their feelings and thoughts, citing the example of its weakness to convey Western thought and feeling in translations. They also said that it was in essence not an Egyptian language but like Latin to the Europeans and, like Latin, would not endure; it thus became imperative that the colloquial languages in the different Arabic countries replace it. One of the proponents of this movement was Muḥammad ʿUthmān Jalāl who translated some of Molière's (the French author) stories into Egyptian colloquial Arabic. This call would widen and intensify, and even during the late twentieth century some writers lobbied for its use in literature (Dāif 1974: 181). During this time Tāhā Ḥusain censured those who called for *ʿāmmiyya* to replace *fuṣṣā*, reiterating that *fuṣṣā* was still living and able to give powerful expression, both writtenly and verbally. It was vibrant and progressive, not stagnant and sluggish (Shayāmī 1995: 117).

The *`āmmiyya* movement did not succeed for the following reasons, some political, some religious, and some purely literary:

1. Some Englishmen called for its use in public lectures and in books. When some orientalist also enthusiastically encouraged its use, the public and its writers perceived a danger in it, and rightly felt that if it succeeded, it would be a political disaster, exactly what the colonizers and occupiers desired. The nation would forget its Arabic and Islamic past.
2. Arabic was the language of the Holy *Qur'ān*, in other words, a holy language which the nation revered. It would, therefore, be difficult, if not impossible, for the populace to abandon it. If they were not good at the language of the *Qur'ān*, they must strive to be good at it.
3. Most writers were of the opinion not to use the language of the street, so that they could retain and maintain the language supremacy that separated writers from the general populace.
4. Writers and translators were able to convey all thought and meaning that they wanted by means of classical Arabic. It was neither wanting nor weak; on the contrary, it had confirmed power, beauty and proficiency to carry thought and meaning of any hue and shade (Dāif 1974: 182).

The above factors collectively contributed to the failure of the use of *`āmmiyya* in Egyptian literature. Its use was limited to the cartoons and jokes in newspapers. In like vain, the efforts of the conservative authors to retain the use the *saj`* and *badī`* styles, failed. The new style, the style of easy and uncomplicated Arabic, emerged victorious. With this style the writers would progress by leaps and bounds in their literary expression and description (Dāif 1974: 182). Eventually, colloquial without its “regional idiosyncracies of vocabulary and syntax, and without offending against classical grammatical rules except in dialogue” would be used in literary Arabic, and thereby bringing the two closer to each other (Haywood 1971: 192).

In this context, mention must again be made of the *Dār al-`Ulūm* started by `Alī Mubārak. As mentioned earlier, this school's aim was to revive, invigorate and improve the teaching and studying of Arabic. It also helped in the teaching of this new style of writing

which satisfied the Egyptians. It must be remembered that only *al-Azhar* was teaching Arabic and its *'ulamā'* were very conservative, adhering to the style of *saj'* and *badī'* and intricate grammar rules. "Changes were required for the transition from old-style anecdotal literature ... The fundamental change required was in language and style – simplification, and the curtailing of rhetorical devices and rare words ..." (Haywood 1971: 126). `Alī Mubārak then established this school to teach the people Arabic in an easy and modern way (void of the difficult *saj'* style) and to train teachers to teach their young students in the same way. The result was that many teachers who could simplify Arabic for the students and who prepared them for this new chapter in Egyptian literary life, graduated from the innovative *Dār al-'Ulūm* institute.

In this manner the people emancipated themselves from the chains and shackles of artificial and imitative *saj'* and returned to the easy, clear style to express what was in their deep inner selves. They discarded the models of *badī'* and *saj'*, not because they were bad, but because they did not suit their lives, being models of prose about personalities, royalty and bureaucrats, and because they had no relevance to the populace and their innermost feelings, politically and socially (Dāif 1974: 182-83).

## 2.2.8 New Forms of Literature and their Writers and Topics

### 2.2.8.1 The *Maqāla* (Essay)

Initially, the style of essay-writing was characterised by the love of *saj'* and *badī'*. Then it slowly shed these 'chains' and leaned towards simplicity in expression, the focus on ideas and its depth, its influence on the treatment of topical issues, and brevity according to the needs of the time ... As for its topics, it varied from the general to politics, social relations, economic affairs, literary issues and criticism, education, and religion. It became the dominant literature form in newspapers (Al-Bāwī n.d: 8)

Not surprisingly, the writers of the late nineteenth century would naturally not adhere to the old models of their predecessors. They started to use models that related to real life and all its events and prepared them for newspaper journalism and other forms of literature. It was journalism that pushed them towards the composition of the *maqāla* (short essay) which was an art unknown to their distant elders. Writers of previous centuries knew what was known as *al-risāla* (epistle) which would treat some topics in quite detail. It resembled a booklet (see section 3.3.1). After the introduction of newspapers, the writers innovated this short literary model to convey the concerns of the populace. They utilized the *maqāla's* suitability for

journalism, namely brevity, uncomplicated style, and the simplification of ideas and language, to make literature easy to read and understandable to the person in the street.

Writers began to practice this new form to express their opinions about local and international politics, social and religious reformation, and all other aspects of life. With practice and time there were, by the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, a crop of excellent essayists, personalities like `Alī Yusuf (who played a major role in al-Manfalūḡ's literary life as will be seen later), Muḡḡafā Kāmil, Fatḡ Zaghlūl, Qāsim Amīn, `Abd al-`Azīz Muḡammad, Luḡfī al-Sayyid, *Shaikh* Muḡammad `Abduh, and others who struggled against the corruption and immorality in society, politics and religion.

These intellectual writers affected Egyptian life deeply and profoundly, because it was they who carried the banner of reformation in all aspects of life. Their influence is still felt today. They made the people aware of their rights, their duties and responsibilities, and everything related to the reasons for their backwardness and decline. They taught the people how to live as free human beings in their country, and how to rise up to realize their independence and achieve a noble way of life. They stirred and aroused the people's latent elements of power (Dḡaif 1974: 183).

Muḡḡafā Kāmil must get the first place of honour for urging the Egyptians to struggle for their independence, the benefits of which were reaped after the revolt in 1919 (under Sa`ad Zaghlūl, when a national government and constitution were installed), and then later after the final revolt (when the English finally exited Egypt in 1952).

*Shaikh* Muḡammad `Abduh, again, initiated a brave struggle in the sphere of *dīn*. He is recognized as the most important religious reformer in modern Egypt. He called for the purification of the *dīn* from erroneous beliefs and superstitions. He believed that the *dīn* must be well researched because the door of *ijtihād* (reaching a consensus of opinion in religious matters) had not been closed. Furthermore, it was imperative that research, in the light of modern knowledge and thought, be done on a continuous basis. He would confirm in his *maqālāt* and in his research that *Islām* was a universal religion, not contradicting modern civilization, and would strongly refute those orientalists and colonizers who attacked the *dīn*. He wrote a *tafsīr* (interpretation and commentary) of the Holy *Qur`ān* which was in agreement with the general spirit of his beliefs. He would reform the law courts during the rule of `Abbās the Second as well as the teaching curricula in the University of *al-Azhar* (Dḡaif 1974: 184). Riyāḡ Qāsim is of the opinion that although *Shaikh* Abduh did not found a new type of literature like "the *qiḡḡa*, *riwāya* or *masraḡiyya*, his efforts definitely assisted in the advancement of the style in Arabic writing ... a style of Arabic's pristine purity,

dynamism and simplicity ... namely the style characteristic of the Arabic heritage ..” (2001: 13).

Qāsim Amīn would again carry the banner of social reformation. He steadfastly believed that the main reason for the Muslims’ decline and backwardness compared to the West was the woman’s *ijāb* (veil) and her ignorance. The *ijāb* stunted her role in society and thwarted all her rights in marriage, nay, and all aspects of her life. It was “a huge barrier between woman and her elevation, and consequently a barrier between the nation and its advance” (quoted in Armstrong 2004: 164). The veil and the *harim* were “excrescences not prescribed by the Koran but imposed later ... it put woman at a disadvantage and had no justification in Islam” (Haywood 1971: 124-25). He wrote *maqālāt* on this issue in the paper *al-Mu’ayyid* and then in 1899 compiled them in the form of a book by the name of *Taḥrīr al-Mar’a* (The Liberation of Women). He wrote another book *al-Mar’a al-Jadīda* (The New Woman) in which he again fervently defended the freedom of women and set out steps to achieve that aim. He eloquently reiterated that she must participate actively in general life and its various duties and responsibilities. This was revolutionary at the beginning of the twentieth century, keeping in mind the conservative atmosphere that prevailed. Before al-Ṭahāwī and others also wrote (rather quietly) on the role of women, but what amazed and shocked the Egyptians was the “stridence of Amīn’s moralizing tone” and “for the first time in Arabic, there was a direct attack on the very morality of the traditional role of women in Muslim society” (Le Gassick 1979: 38). Much credit must be given to Amīn that the revolution succeeded unequivocally after the first world war, for the woman regained her freedom, cast off the *ijāb*, studied and started to participate in governmental work and other public services like health.

As far as his style and argumentations are concerned, Haywood concludes that

It is a matter of regret that Amīn’s style leaves much to be desired. At times it is positively gauche, and, in lawyer fashion, he appears to mistake exactitude for clarity. Here he contrasts with ‘Abduh, whose Arabic sounds well and is clear. Qāsim Amīn’s polemics are tremendously important historically, and spring from a noble mind. But they hardly deserve the title of literature ... (1971: 125).

In this way the crop of gifted writers rejuvenated the people’s life and intellect, causing them to progress in leaps and bounds. Many of them mastered foreign languages and delved deeply into the works of Western philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. They would use these fresh and vibrant Western philosophical ideas in the *maqālāt* they wrote for their people. This tendency was clearly illustrated in the works of Fatḥī Zaghlūl and Aḥmad Luḥī al-Sayyid.

The former would translate ‘The Secret of the Progress of Saxon English’ and publish a series of *maqālāt* in *al-Mu’ayyid* in the year 1899. Luḡfī al-Sayyid would busy himself with translating some works of Aristotle. Fatḡī Zaghlūl researched the shortcomings of his society and Luḡfī was doing groundwork in Western philosophy, both ancient and modern. The significance of this was that they, and those who acquired similar profound Western cultural values, were motivated by the new prose form, the *maqāla*, which became a model for vibrant ideas and philosophy, and which could be used to convey the political, ethical and social thought of the West (Dāif 1974: 185).

Egyptians, together with the previously mentioned Lebanese-Syrian *émigré* writers, thus initiated the *maqāla*, political and otherwise. Here, mention must be made of Muḡafā Luḡfī al-Manfalūḡī who did not write on politics but rather on social issues. He published his *maqālāt* in the paper *al-Mu’ayyid* under the title of *al-Naḡarāt*. He covered several social aspects in them, and compiled and published them in book form with the same title. Al-Manfalūḡī was greatly concerned with style and the conveyance of meaning in a clear and artistic way. He steered away completely from the use of difficult and intricate *badī* and *saj*. Muḡafā pioneered a new style, a style in which words were chosen and used with care and deliberation, and wherein there was music which was pleasant and acceptable to the ear. The youthful generations at the beginning of the twentieth century would be greatly impressed by his literary style and would for long use it as a model for their writing (Dāif 1974: 186).

#### 2.2.8.2 The *Khiḡāba* (Sermon or Oratory Discourse)

In the meantime, the art of *khiḡāba* was growing and developing. The *khiḡāba* was not new as Arabs vigorously engaged in this art during the *Jāhiliyya* period (one hundred and fifty years or more before the dawn of *Islām*) and Islamic period (the dawn of *Islām* up to the rule of the four rightly guided Caliphs Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī). They knew the political *khiḡāba* as used by Ziyād bin Ubaih and his contemporaries and the religious *khiḡāba* as presented by al-ḡasan al-Baḡrī and his contemporaries. These two types blossomed during the Umayyad period (a designation of the time when *Umayyad* caliphs ruled the Islamic Empire from 661-750), but began to fade and lose their vitality and freshness during the Abbasid and subsequent periods. The Abbasid rulers oppressed their people and prohibited all political speeches. The Arab mind stagnated, the *imāms* and preachers not being progressive and innovative in their speeches and lectures given on the occasion of *jumu’a* (Friday prayer) and the days of *‘Īd* (celebrations after the month of *Ramaḡān* and on



the tenth day of the *Hajj*). They just repeated the same speeches of *shaikhs* like Ibn Nabāta and his contemporary Saif al-Daula, making changes and substitutions here and there.

When the nineteenth century dawned, the political and religious *khiṭāba* was, so to say, dead. It was only when the people started to demand their rights and when Western law was introduced, that the political *khiṭāba* was revived. A new form of *khiṭāba*, known to Europe, emerged: the *khiṭāba qaṭʿiyya* (legal discourse in court). Lawyers and prosecutors would be trained in this new form and they would soon become proficient and adept at it. Egypt would lead the way in these two forms of *khiṭāba* in modern Arabic literature. The other Arab countries under the oppressive rule of the Turks were denied their freedom and the application of Western law, and thus the legal *khiṭāba* was not transferred to them. These oratory discourses enabled the Egyptians to enjoy and benefit from what the lecturers would read to them of Western revolutions, principles of freedom and goodwill, and human rights (Ḍaif 1974: 185-86).

#### 2.2.8.3 The *Qīṣṣa* ( Short Story)

The writers did not only limit themselves to the *maqāla* and *khiṭāba* before the end of the First World War, but experimented with another form of literature that was new to them: the *qīṣṣa*. “The short story and the narrative developed apace and took a form unknown to former Arab writers ...” (Al-Bāwī n.d: 8). As mentioned before, many Western short stories were translated into Arabic. Two of the foremost ones were *ʿadīth ʾIsā ibn Hishām* (The Narration of Isa bin Hisham) by Muḥammad al-Muwailaḥī and *Zainab* (1914) by Muḥammad ʿusain Haikal (b.1888).

Al-Muwailaḥī’s attempt illustrated that some writers still imitated and were infatuated with the old literary models like the *maqāma*, a short story form of about two to three pages in which a narrator related a story in the *sajʿ* (rhymed prose) style. The *maqāma* usually includes poetry to display some skill in manipulating the language or prosody, and is essentially “a linguistic tour de force, a display of virtuosity” (Haywood 1971: 292). It will be considered at length in sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2. Al-Muwailaḥī changed this short form into a long social story about Aḥmad Pāsha al-Munaikalī who died during the period of Muḥammad ʿAlī and was resurrected to life at the end of the nineteenth century. Aḥmad Pāsha would meet ʾIsā bin Hishām, the narrator, and relive his life in the modern Egypt of that period. He found that everything had changed and began to compare between the past and the present, specifically the police and legal systems and the habits of the people, describing them extensively in a socially critical manner. This criticism was presented in the *sajʿ*

*maqāma* style as if he was writing a long *maqāma* (Daif 1974: 186-87). Tāhā Ḥusain felt that the Egyptian short story in its first stages imitated either the ancient Arabic literature or foreign literature. As an example he mentions that *Ḥadīth ʿĪsā ibn Hishām*, which describes the Egyptian social life and its different strata, does not adhere to the fundamental principles of the short story as are known in modern times, that the author uses *sajʿ* and other *balagha* devices as profusely as did the writers of certain previous periods, and that al-Muwailaḥī included poetic verses at inappropriate places (Al-Dasūqī 2002: 20).

So, although there were still writers who imitated the old models, they attempted to do so in a style which suited the modern life of that period. They tried to use it to pinpoint and criticize the prevalent social ills and to offer solutions for them, and to do it in a way that satisfied the new literary taste.

The best story to represent that new taste was *Zainab* which Haikal wrote in 1910 while in Paris and which he published in *al-Muʿayyid*. It was an entirely new effort because it was totally void of the *maqāma* style, there was no narrator, and no *sajʿ* or *badīʿ*. On the contrary, the language was simple and close to the people's daily tongue, *ʿāmmiyya* only used when the story warranted it. *Zainab* was a truly Egyptian story, describing Egypt's country life, its rich and poor levels of society, and the social obstacles between the two. Qāsim Amīn's call for the liberation of woman also came across clearly in the story, as did the peasant way of life in the countryside and the beauty and charm of its natural scenery.

During this time, too, the *qīṣṣa taʾrīkhiyya* (historical short story) was taken up with great vigour by Jurjī Zaidān (1861-1914), a Lebanese who spent most of his life in Egypt. He wrote about twenty original stories, basing their events on Islamic history. In addition, Zaidān compiled a history of the Islamic civilization in five volumes, as well as a history of Arabic literature (based on orientalist's works) in four volumes. Although the stories did not strictly follow the structure and narrative sequence of the Western short story, they were notable contributions to the development of the Arabic short story (Daif 1974: 188). One of his admirable feats was that by making great Arabs of the past no longer seem remote, and by describing them in a modern literary form, he "performed a double service – to his fellow-Arabs' self-respect, and to modern Arabic literature" (Haywood 1971: 135). Some more observations about him are to be found in section 3.4.9.

Another noteworthy contribution was Tāhā Ḥusain's *Thikrā Abī al-Aʿlā* (The Memoirs of Abū al-Aʿlā). This is the work for which he obtained his doctorate in literature. It blew a new, fresh wind into the study of Egyptian literature and was sought after by many prominent European orientalist. In the book Tāhā analyzed the mind and inner life of Abū

al-A`lā and the role which the environment and time play in a person's life. As to why he was so enchanted by the life of Abū al-A`lā (who was also blind), Ḥusain reiterated,

I discovered my intense love for him while living in Italy for a while, and if Abū al-A`lā had known the advantages of travelling, then his views about life would surely have changed and he would not have been so pessimistic; he said about himself, 'I am thrice a prisoner: a prisoner of darkness (being blind), a prisoner in my house, and my spirit is a prisoner of my body ...' (Al-Dasūqī 2002: 106).

In this manner Egyptians, by the outbreak of World War One, clearly progressed in their production of quality literature and in their critique of this literature. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century Egypt's sparks of thought could possibly have taken flame and spread their light into various intellectual and philosophical directions. She, however, decided to do it with patience, perseverance and after long and thorough consideration (Dāif 1974: 188).

## 2.3 The Birth of an Egyptian Literature and Literary Standard of Criticism

### Political Freedom

After World War I, in 1919, a national revolt broke out. A bitter struggle between the Egyptian people and the English occupying forces ensued, many nationals being banned or imprisoned. The struggle went the people's way and the colonizers were forced to succumb to the demands of the masses. Although limited in extent, the changes brought about led to a new stage in the history of Egypt. A constitution was drawn up and a parliament instituted, thereby affecting all aspects of life in a significant way. The people could live relatively independently, the authorities took the dissemination of education more seriously, and the masses regained some of their freedom.

Different political parties were initiated by various groups. Each party would publish its own newspaper in which their political stance would be explained and propagated. They debated and argued with one another about what type of government must be established and about what was best for the nation. The result was a significant transformation in the social and political life of Arab society, the political parties aiming "not only at achieving independence from foreign domination but also preserving and consolidating such independence on the basis of a political doctrine and a specific program of social and economic reform" (Khouri & Algar 1974: 13). The *maqālāt* which the writers and philosophers wrote on political, social and economic issues caused the people to further

develop intellectually and spiritually. The national spirit, and the spirit of the youth in particular, was revitalized, and that augured well for the future (Dāif 1974: 188-89).

### 2.3.2 The Literary Debates and the Personalities Involved

The arguments that were raging amongst the different political parties spilled over to the writers. They would fiercely argue and debate over literature and what ‘ideal model’ or ‘ideal standard for literature’ must be established amongst the Egyptians in their intellectual and literary life. As with the important and vital concerns mentioned so far, it is necessary to deal with this topic because it furnishes the background for a great deal of the literature of the period as nearly every writer of consequence was concerned in one way or another with the literary issues of the day, and his / her attitude towards them is reflected in his / her works. The main personalities involved were al-`Aqqād, al-Māzinī, Haikal, Ṭāhā Ṣusain, Muḥafāẓ al-Rāfi`ī and Salāma Mūsā.

The first two produced a new method of Arabic poetry criticism. Together they wrote *al-Dīwān* (The Collection) in which al-`Aqqād would virulently criticise the poetry of Aḥmad Shauqī and al-Māzinī would concentrate his attack on Shukrī’s and al-Manfalūḥī’s writing style. The main aim of the two authors was “the debunking and attacking (of) current orthodox values or the literary Establishment” (Badawi 1974: 88). Al-Māzinī felt that al-Manfalūḥī lacked culture (that is, he did not study abroad and therefore acquired no foreign culture) and that his style was pure words, not carrying any substantial meaning and deep thought. He claimed that al-Manfalūḥī’s style was too ‘soft’ and ‘empty’, not containing anything but ‘tears’ (alluding to al-Manfalūḥī’s book, *al-`Abarāt*, meaning ‘Tears’) and that only adolescents would find it fascinating (Dāif 1974: 189-90). Al-Māzinī did not state it explicitly, but his criticism could be attributed to the fact that the critics’ concept of the ‘ideal model’ in writing had changed. The modern writer must not only be satisfied with a beautiful, strong and pure style, but must also possess deep and expansive thought that could pave the way for and facilitate precise expression about the innermost emotions, thought, and different degrees of consciousness.

R.A. Nicholson quoted H.A.R. Gibb when he remarked that the leaders of the Neo-Arabic literature

are for the most part men who have drunk from other springs and look at the world with different eyes. Yet the past still plays a part in their intellectual background, and there is a section amongst them upon whom the past retains a hold scarcely shaken by newer influences. For many decades the partisans of the ‘old’ and the

‘new’ have engaged in a struggle for the soul of the Arabic world... The protagonists are ...the European-educated classes of Egyptians... on the one hand, and those in Egypt... whose education has followed traditional lines on the other... the conflict has torn the Arabic world from its ancient moorings, and... the contemporary literature of Egypt and Syria breathes in its more recent developments a spirit foreign to the old traditions (1966: 469-70).

The discussions and arguments amongst the above-mentioned prominent Egyptian literary figures gained momentum and can be summarized as follows: In 1923 Muḥammad Ṣādiq al-Rāfi‘ī sent a letter, written by him in the old-fashioned *saj`* style, to the newspaper *al-Siyāsa* (Politics). Muḥammad Ṣāfi was a staunch traditionalist and very conservative. This letter caused a furore, and Ṭāhā Ḥusain opined that the style of the letter (*saj`*) did not suit the new literary taste of that time. In this fashion the two hotly debated, through newspaper articles, the merits of the old and the modern writing style and the new literary taste. Ṭāhā believed that there was no problem in borrowing some meaning and style from the West as long as they did not spoil the beauty and charm of the Arabic language.

Ṭāhā would also initiate vigorous discussion about whether to accept unquestioningly all that their predecessors had said or whether it must be put to the test, when he wrote a book about Abū Nawās who lived during the second century after the *Hijra*. He was of the opinion that when a respected writer or critic from the distant past said something about a poet or caliph, his / her remark was not a holy opinion that could not be changed, for s(he) could err too, and that maybe the modern mind was more developed than the ancient mind.

Simultaneously, Salāma Mūsā (1888-1958) wrote a *maqāla* in *al-Hilāl* stating that Muḥammad Ṣāfi al-Rāfi‘ī was a representative of the old school, namely that he was a good writer but his style was unsuitable for the modern ‘ideal literary model’. Mūsā was critical of all ancient literature. Due to modern scientific progress, he wrote, there was no need for the past style and expression. According to him, tastes and feelings change as material and scientific life change and, by implication, the nature of literature must change. Muḥammad Ṣādiq said that he was all for renewal in ideas and meaning, but would reject any renewal in language (Dāif 1974: 192). Mūsā advocated strongly in all his *maqālāt* and books that the past in its totality must be discarded, and that the Arabs must follow the West in their political, literary and scientific models. Incidentally, Mūsā published a progressive review *al-Majalla al-Jadīda* (1929-42) and his articles reflected his manifold interests: evolution, socialism, Utopia and the sub-conscious mind. His socialist ideas and belief that literature should be written for the people, about the problems of the people, and in a language that the

people could understand, and his attack on the rhetoric and artificialities of the literary style, were expressed “in trenchant prose which is itself a model of directness and clarity ...” (Badawi 1974: 205). Haywood believes that “Perhaps his position in modern Arabic literature is due for a reappraisal” (1971: 208), especially after the publication of a collection of his unpublished articles as *Maqālāt Mamnū`a* (Forbidden Articles).

Modern thinkers like Ṭāhā, al-`Aqqād, al-Māzinī and Haikal did not support Mūsa in his belief that everything old must be discarded. They preferred to continue with the strong, pure classical Arabic, not straying from its origins, but rather strengthening and developing it with modern models and modern thought. This was, after all, how European literature developed and progressed – it did not sever itself from its roots, it experimented with new models, and largely renewed itself until it advanced from generation to generation (Dāif 1974: 189-92).

Then Ṭāhā issued his book *Fī al-Shi`r al-Jāhilī* (About *Jāhilī* [pre-Islamic] Poetry) in 1926 which was later reprinted as *Fī al-Adab al-Jāhilī* (About *Jāhilī* Literature) in 1927. This was a research on the poetry of the *Jāhilī* period, founded on a Western philosophical method, the philosophy of Descartes. Briefly stated, this philosophy was based on ‘doubt’. Originally the researcher doubted something and then accepted it after research and testing. Ṭāhā Ḥusain was guided by what the Europeans (for example, David Samuel Margoliouth [Kurayyim 2004: 35]) wrote on Homer’s *Iliad* and their doubt about who really compiled that long narrative *qaṣīda* (ode). Some of them believed that different poets compiled it. Ṭāhā thus applied those studies of Greek poetry to *Jāhilī* poetry. His final conclusion was that there was a lot of plagiarism in *Jāhilī* poetry, and that it was to some extent borrowed from previous works of poetry. This plagiarised literature “represented nothing, it did not prove anything, and no dependence must be put on it to obtain a true literary picture of that *Jāhilī* period” and that “*Jāhilī* poetry does not represent the pre-Islamic religious, intellectual, political and economic life – rather, the noble *Qurān* represents it ideally” (Zulām: 128), that is, it was the language of the *Qurān* which provided a yardstick for judging the authenticity of the language of the poetry.

Not surprisingly, this created a stir among the educated and even in the Egyptian parliament. For Arabs, these arguments, coming from a fellow-Arab, was folly and treachery because it cast doubt on the accepted view of the environment in which Muḥammad received his revelation (Haywood 1971: 195). Despite many refutations about his theories, Ḥusain stood his ground. The only change he exacted was the omission of a chapter that created much consternation in the scientific, literary and religious fields (Shayāmī 1995: 55). His determination illustrated that the new standard for literary criticism was successful. This

standard was neither purely European nor purely Arab, but the writers were able to ‘marry’ the two, thereby producing an Egyptian literary standard of criticism, a standard which was the result of, firstly, the modern West and the ancient Arabic heritage becoming one, and, secondly, the new found freedom in thought and opinion after the first national revolt during the twentieth century (Dāif 1974: 193).

Notwithstanding its controversial nature, *Fī al-Adab al-Jāhilī* won the admiration of many later Arab scholars. Doctor Yahya Shayāmī, for example, says: “One of the most enjoyable, fertile and richest historical literary research as far as thought, viewpoints, opinions and remarks are concerned, is Ṭāhā Ḥusain’s history of the *Jāhilī* literature ... the reader will find extreme benefit and the utmost delight in reading it ... he was a pioneer in the writing of literary history ... ” (Shayāmī 1995: 55). The compromised view on pre-Islamic poetry is that, while not authentic in every detail, it nonetheless constitutes a veritable and reliable picture of aspects of Arabian life before the dawn of *Islām*, and that it is a genuine literary heritage as a whole.

These reformist thinkers and writers did not want to, as al-Rāfi‘ī and others thought, destroy the past, but wanted rather to revive and develop it in a new form. In this renewal, they did not cut themselves off from the past, neither in literature nor in critique, but depended on the two elements that complemented each other, namely the preservation of the Arabic-Islamic heritage and the advantages and usefulness of Western literature. They responded “creatively to the challenging impact of Western culture on their modes of thought and expression ...” (Khouri & Algar 1974: 19), and in this way paved the way for an Egyptian criticism with an Egyptian literary standard to be born.

### 2.3.3 An Egyptian Literature is Born and Bred in Egypt

“... Attempts were made to create Egyptian theatre, Egyptian narratives, Egyptian short stories, and through that, bring forth a free Egyptian personality and a free Egyptian individual. Due to prevailing circumstances, these hopes and aims were not easy to achieve” (Qāsim 2001: 15). The reformers created great flexibility in the language. Many youth who had mastered foreign languages and who had profound knowledge about Arabic literature, followed the example set by these *mujaddidīn*. Taufīq al-Ḥakīm and Maḥmūd Taimūr were good examples. They did not stop at the *maqāla* or the *qīṣṣa* with its shortcomings, but made the *maqāla* richer and more versatile, whether in politics or in literature. They started to produce complete plays and short stories, literature with structure, climax and precise

narrative sequence. This was all done in the new Egyptian literature, using pure classical Arabic.

Some writers and critics like Haikal wanted to take it even further by calling for the complete ‘Egyptianizing’ of their literature. This should be done by studying the history and fables of their Pharaonic past and then to derive their literature from it. However, this nationalist leaning did not succeed, for the writers went in a much wider direction, taking advantage of their Pharoanic history and at the same time extending it to include their whole heritage: Pharoanic, Arabic and Islamic (Dāif 1974: 195).

Quite a few writers were of course controversial due to the topics they wrote on, for example Shublī Shumail tried to discuss Darwin and his theory of evolution, and Faraḡ Anḡūn (1874-1922) wrote on socialism and communism”, but these ideas did not find acceptance amongst the people because they were not akin to the religious beliefs in Egypt. In fact, they found these ideas “hostile and had a bad opinion about them for their sympathetic stand with the French and the English on the one hand, and their feelings with what was inherent in these ideas and which insulted their religion ... for example Faraḡ Anḡūn claimed in his articles that Christianity was by far more open and enlightened to scientific research than *Islām*” (Qāsim 2001: 14). This led to fierce debates. It was none other than *Imām* `Abduh who refuted Anḡūn’s assertions with a series of articles on the impartiality and tolerance of *Islām* and Muslims to philosophy, science and the adherents of other religions, an enlightenment unsurpassed by any other religion (Akāwī 2001: 117).

The general opinion was that the reformist movement was not destructive in its intentions and deeds; on the contrary, it was seen as a constructive movement in the sense that it built on the Arabic heritage (its language, its topics, its history), that it was inspired by both Islamic and non-Islamic elements, and that it studied the present day life of the period with its various inspirational environments. Simultaneously, it made a deep study of European literature, criticizing it, analyzing it extensively, and presenting it in a commendable and laudable way to the Arab public. Literary critics, no matter how hard they tried, would not be able to do justice to the far-reaching and lasting contribution this reformist movement made in giving Egyptian literature its distinctive character. It can be said, without exaggeration, that Egypt acquired an Egyptian literature, grown in Egypt, at the hands of a group of Egyptians (Dāif 1974: 195-96).

## 2.4 The New Life : The Arab East and the West Become One

### 2.4.1 Total Westernization and Intellectual Progress



The criteria for literary criticism was no more the old model of al-`Aqqād and al-Māzinī – the literary life of the people had advanced significantly due to the reformers who possessed both Arabic and foreign literary skills and who derived a new literary model which suited the people's taste and modern life. The political, intellectual and material life of the Egyptians, compared to that of their ancestors, had changed forever. There were no differences anymore between most of the Egyptians and Europeans as far as the ideal model for material life was concerned because the Egyptians lived like the Europeans (namely, using and indulging in the same modern requirements of life like style of clothing, beauty products, electrical appliances, means of transport, recreational past times, and so forth). Although the urban areas, naturally, benefited the most, even the country folk profited from this material progress (for example in the means of transport like European trains and cars). The significance of this was that the modern Western lifestyle had replaced the old Egyptian lifestyle, and that the Western way of life had become part and parcel of the city dwellers and the cultured level of society.

An even more profound development was in the people's incorporeal life. A parliament was established and democracy implemented based on the European model. Everything was westernised: the legal system, the economic system, and even the army with its weaponry. In other words, since the end of the First World War, Egyptian incorporeal life in all its facets and manifestations ran on Western lines.

This also happened to a large extent in the sphere of intellectual life. Education was made available to everybody at all levels of society, with curricula based on modern European models. Besides the founding of The University of Cairo, three other universities were opened: *`Ain al- Shams* (Heliopolis), *al-Iskandriyya* (Alexandria) and *Asyū* (named after the city Asyut in central Egypt). Egyptian professors and lectures would work alongside their Western colleagues in these places of higher learning.

Egyptians embarked extensively on learning foreign languages, not only French and English as at the beginning of the twentieth century, but also German, Italian and Spanish. Travel to Europe and America became frequent, and Egyptian lecturers would be invited to give lectures in American and European universities, thereby effectively participating in the intellectual heritage of humankind.

The significance of this was that Egyptian intellectual life had progressed to an extent not experienced or witnessed before; so profound was this development that it could be called a revolution, a revolution caused by the two streams, Arabic-Islamic heritage and modern Western thought becoming one (Dāif 1974: 196-98).

### 2.4.2 Other Fields of Progress

The influence of the West was more profound than that of the Arabic heritage for the simple reason that a generation of students specialising in all branches of Western science and Western literature, modern and ancient, graduated from the Egyptian universities that regulated Egyptian intellectual life to a very large extent. The first consequence of this was that Arabic became the lingua franca for many European sciences, and many students became adept at scientific and literary expression and terminology, and in this way literature was firmly united with science. Many literary writers were specialist scientists, for example in medicine, engineering, mathematics, chemistry and geography. The result was that Egyptian literature was no longer separate from natural science, the two rather worked together extensively (Dāif 1974: 198).

The same could be said about the fields of law and philosophy. Many writers graduated from the law schools, especially in the fields of politics and journalism, and likewise writers graduated in philosophy from the colleges of art and literature. The study of philosophy was not restricted to Aristotle and Greek philosophy (as translated and presented by Luḥfī al-Sayyid previously), but branched out to include that of American and European philosophy. Likewise, Social Science and Psychology were studied as disciplines (Dāif 1974: 198-99).

### 2.4.3 The Role of Translations

The learned and those who were seriously concerned about culture went further by translating all the gems of Western philosophy and the choicest works of Western literature into Arabic. As soon as a Western poet(ess) or writer published a book it would be translated into Arabic. In this respect, much gratitude and deserved praise went to thinkers like al-Māzinī, Khalīl Maṣrān, Ṭāhā Ṣusain, Aḥmad Ṣasan al-Zayyāt and a group of youth who came after them like Taufīq al-Ṣakīm, Maḥmūd Taimūr, Najīb Maḥfūḥ, and Yaḥyā Ṣaqqī, amongst others. Even Western general history and the history of Western literature were translated. The writers expanded their literary trend from the classics, romance and realism to include symbolism, mysticism, surrealism and naturalism.

The quality and value of the above-mentioned writers were reflected in the fact that their short stories were translated into many foreign languages and, furthermore, some of their theatrical plays were translated and performed in Western theatres. The plays of, for

example Taufiq al- Ḥakīm, were performed on the stages of Italy and France. In other words, Egyptians were not only taking culture and literature from the West, but also supplying Europe with Arab culture and literary works. In this way, all barriers and screens between the two cultures were removed. The connection between Arab and European was complete. Arabic literature was no longer isolated, living on its own, but became a humanistic international literature, on par with all the great, living literatures of the world. Tāhā Ḥusain would pay tribute to the role of translations, affirming that the Arabic language and literature were enriched by the translation of foreign languages into Arabic, and thereby the writers served their language, literature, history and nation; if it was not for translations, weakness and neglect would have continued, and Arabic would have stagnated (Shayāmī 1995: 122). It can be said, without fear of contradiction, that modern Egyptian literature, after the many stages it went through since the beginning of the nineteenth century (during which it changed in topic, structure and style), became complete and whole after the First World War (Dāif 1974: 199-200).

#### 2.4.4 The Role of Journalism in the Creation of a New Language

The newsprint, of course, also played a role in the new Egyptian literature. As mentioned before, many daily newspapers and magazines (weekly and monthly) appeared after World War 1. Most of its editors carried university degrees or college diplomas. The editors employed or invited various literary writers to write articles in their respective papers. They not only wrote on literature, but on politics too. Inevitably, they would enter into party politics. They participated and became embroiled in the debate about ancient and modern literature. At that juncture, newspaper journalism connected directly to the Egyptian literature movement, the one clearly influencing the other. As for journalism, the talented writers refined the language of the press and enabled the newspapers to express the political ideas and feelings of its readers clearly and precisely.

From all that has been said, it can be seen that the literary movement tried to make the language and style of its newspaper articles about ancient Arabic literature and modern Western literature suitable for the ordinary man to understand, and to encourage them to buy and read them. The result was the innovation of a new language: a mixture of classical Arabic (with its eloquence and clarity) and colloquial Arabic (with its simplicity and proximity to the common person). In this way journalism influenced the language of modern Arabic literature. In fact, it innovated this language under the influence of the populace whom it addressed. The writers also succeeded effectively in their attempts to simplify their style. They made the old

language, whose style, form and expression seemed as solid as rock, more flexible and more pliable, and gave it scope and capacity for unlimited growth, until almost no trace of the old style remained, and until the public could understand it with ease (Dāif 1974: 200-01).

The press was instrumental in the spread of the new Egyptian language, not only throughout Egypt, but to the whole Arab world. The peoples of the countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Hijaz, Sudan, Morocco, and so forth, all welcomed the language in their homes. The new language became widely used in speech and literature in these countries and would soon predominate. The result was that Egypt became the leader in the Arabic East and gained a place of distinction amongst the Arab counties for its literature and culture. The Arabs at large also read and studied the books written by Egyptians, thereby making Egyptian literature a means of co-operation and collaboration amongst the Arab countries.

#### 2.4.5 The Negative Effects of the News Media

To a certain extent, the press also negatively affected literature:

1. Firstly, it led to speed in producing literature. In fact, speed became its most important characteristic. Speed gave rise to superficiality in writing. Papers had a distribution deadline and could not wait. The writers had to rush so that their articles could be published in the first issue.
2. Secondly, the writers' personal freedom was restricted to a large extent because they could not write that which contradicted the paper's opinion on issues.
3. Thirdly, their literary freedom was curtailed because they could not write how they wanted. They were allotted a column or two in the paper and could not exceed it by one line.
4. Fourthly, the editors not only controlled the speed and freedom of the journalists, but also had a big say in the topic. They could not write on any issues they wanted, but had to abide by the topics suggested to them.
5. Lastly, the writers had to adapt their style to that which suited journalism, a style that could be understood by the masses without any difficulty.

Radio broadcasting also entered the field of literature and fell prey to the same requirements of journalism. Time was limited and most of its listeners were from the general public. In fact, radio needed even more simplification of language than the press because only the literate read newspapers, but the literate and illiterate listened to radio.

All of the above factors combined to bring golden changes to modern Arabic literature, changes that literature did not know before the First World War. It can be said that Egypt attained journalistic literature and radio literature, literature that was unknown to their predecessors. It was a literature generally characterised by speed and lack of great depth, deliberation, innovation and creativity. The important thing was that it encompassed all of the modern forms of literature, namely the *maqāla*, *qīṣṣa* and *masrā'iyya* (theatrical play).

It is worth noting perhaps that there *were* writers who maintained their personal and literary freedom and who cared about the quality of their essays and articles. Although they participated in the 'speedy' literature, they always endeavoured to abide by the high standards and lofty ideals of literary art. Rather than dropping to the literary level of the populace, they strove to raise the people's level of understanding and taste, and to teach them to appreciate the artistic beauty, goodness and truth of true literature.

These were the writers who stood in the forefront of modern Arabic literature. They were the people who represented Egyptian literature in its fullest sense, a literature obtained from two sources: ancient Arabic literature and modern Western literature. These writers sacrificed their nights and spent the best part of their days and prime of their lives in writing it (Dāif 1974: 200-03). Tāhā Ḥusain reflected that

(After *ʿadīth ʾIsā ibn Hishām*) the Egyptian short story progressed in leaps and bounds and became truly Egyptian in nature; it equally freed itself from imitating both the ancient Arabic and foreign literature. It began to depict Egyptian society, reflecting its traditions and environment. It started to deliberate on the country's social and psychological problems, registered political and historical incidents, and as far as art is concerned, the short story reached the pinnacle of power and originality ... (Al-Dasūqī 2002: 20).

We have seen above how the West and Arab East drew closer (through the building of cultural and intellectual bridges) to each other until there were no significant differences (except in the field of religion) between the two civilizations. This was mainly due to the efforts of a group of writers whose aim was to save Arabic from degeneration, and in the process new forms of literature were developed. The driving forces were the revival of the Arabic *turāth*, the connection to the West, the translation of books (literary and otherwise), the role of the press, the Syrian and Lebanese emigrators, and the political and national movements. (Shayāmī 1995: 71). The benefits were manifold: new writing styles evolved, the

Arabic and Islamic heritage was revived, an Egyptian literature was born, and the Egyptian people made great strides politically. Polemical literature was still alive, but with a greater awareness of the Western spirit. The removal of the straitjacket of *badī`* and *saj`* was complete, the only *balāgha* devices used being simile and metaphor, and even these in a way more related to modern life and its requirements. “The best prose writing (was) not that of men trying to reconcile Middle Eastern and Western cultures and not succeeding: the two elements (had) become integrated into a literature that (was) technically assured, yet undeniably Arab” (Haywood 1971: 191). The stage was now set for the growth and advancement of new forms of literature.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **The Growth and Advancement of the *Maqāla* and the *Qiṣṣa***

Literature is the “record of any nation’s *turāth*, each generation inheriting it from the previous one over the years. Literature consists of poetry and prose like sermons, stories and narratives, information and researches ... It enriches a civilization ... (The pioneers in the re-awakening of a language) are followed by generations even more affected by the intellectual and cultural revival, (generations) who would, in turn, put their distinctive stamp on modern Arabic literature ... Literature plays an important and efficacious role in the systematic and chronological records of nations, revolutionary, politically and socially, and it affords a solid and firm base for the future of succeeding generations” (Al-Bāwī n.d: 7 & 12).

As we have seen, Egyptian and, by implication, Arabic literature, developed profoundly and extensively during the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. Two of the main reasons were:

1. The pervasive influence of the West, and
2. Its change from an ‘aristocratic’ literature (namely, directed at kings, princes and persons of high status only) to a ‘democratic’ literature (namely, addressing the people of all social levels).

The significant factors that assisted in bringing Arabic literature out of its predilection, stagnation and torpor, are, in the words of Muḥammad al-Bāwī,

the building of cultural and intellectual bridges between East and West by means of education, delegations, translations, the role of the press, newspapers and libraries” (n.d: 7). In addition, he mentions “the establishment of writing, publication and translation committees, and the founding of various Eastern language institutes in, for example, London, Paris and Berlin, as well as the setting up of libraries and publishing centers by orientalist. This in turn, helped in the revival of the Arabic-Islamic heritage ... (n.d: 7)

The pervasive and pivotal roles of these circumstances and determinants in the context of the development of ‘new’ types of Arabic literature will be examined in the present chapter. Further, the pioneering roles and contributions of writers of note, the Syrian-Lebanese *muhājirūn*, and the Arabic heritage will be focused on.

The new forms of prose that gradually developed were the judiciary discourse in courts (*khiṭāba*), the essay (*maqāla*), the short story (*qiṣṣa*) and novel (*uqṣūṣa*), and the play (*masraḥiyya*). The *maqāla*, *qiṣṣa* and *uqṣūṣa* will be discussed in detail, while just salient points about the *khiṭāba* and *masraḥiyya* will be mentioned because of their relevance to the development of the former two and the overall evolution of Arabic prose.

### 3.1 The Society and Literature

Before looking at the actual development of the new literary forms, it is important to look at, and to know the type of society, in which a writer found himself / herself during the period in which this literature appeared. It is from the society which a writer obtains his / her writing matter and it is the daily lives of its people from which s(he) finds the threads to weave his / her stories. It would not be farfetched to claim that the society itself and the circumstances which prevailed in the society actually gave the greatest impetus to the advancement and shaping of these literary forms. This was borne out by the works of many short story writers who used the problems in the society, including possible solutions to them, as their main themes and plots. This was also true for al-Manfalūṭī as will be seen later. They provided the background for most of the literature that he composed because, as was the case with nearly all major writers of the period, he was concerned in one way or another with the political, social, religious and economic problems of his society, and his attitude towards them is reflected in his writings.

The Egyptian society during the periods preceding the short story was riddled with shortcomings. The problem of ignorance and illiteracy, for example, was widespread amongst the general population, especially in the lower class of the countryside. A common belief amongst the rulers and elite was that the peasants were good for nothing and should be left in the dark. Those who were concerned with culture and education began to discuss these issues and propagated the lifting of the peasants’ living standards and education. That would in turn raise the level of the nation as a whole. In fact, a struggle ensued between the ‘new’ cultural group and those who fought to maintain the status quo. The essays and stories of the day treated these issues in detail. The stories of, for example, Maṣmūd Taimūr (about whom



more will be said later on), were mostly about social issues and problems and their solutions. Some of them were successful from a literary angle, while others were deemed a failure because they concentrated too much on the problems rather than on the artistic aspects of the short story (Būqārī 1979: 20). Some of the other topics covered will be mentioned under the *qiṣṣa* (3.4.11).

### 3.2 The *Khiṣṣa* (Sermon or Public Oratory Discourse)

The *khiṣṣa* as used by *imāms*, political and social speakers, played a major role in the development of Arabic literature. Three types of *khiṣṣa* could be discerned: political, social and judiciary.

#### 3.2.1 The Political *Khiṣṣa*

The political *khiṣṣa* made a come back, blossoming in a way unknown during the previous periods, due to the influence of the above-mentioned factors. Their contents were derived from the inexhaustible sources of Western thought and its accompanying principles of freedom and political rights. They also derived their subject matter from the miserable Egyptian way of life that was characterised by an oppressive rule and a loathsome occupation. Soon politicians with great oratory skills, people like Muḥafā Kāmil and Sa'ad Zaghlūl (who also played a major role in al-Manfalūḥ's life, as will be detailed later) would appear. As described before, an Egyptian parliament was installed and various political parties mushroomed. Each party had many skilful orators elucidating and propagating their political stances. In this fashion the political *khiṣṣa* experienced growth and development in both style and quality of content. This would in turn impact on the development of the *maqāla* published in newspapers (Dāif 1974: 203-04).

#### 3.2.2 The Judiciary and Social *Khiṣṣa*

Egypt also took her modern judiciary system from the West. It adopted the system of prosecution and defence in courts, and thereby the judiciary *khiṣṣa* was initiated. The law courts became like those of the West, with the men of law arguing their points in oratory speeches. As more and more lawsuits were litigated, so did this kind of *khiṣṣa* make progress, and many legal lawyers became famous.

Alongside the political and legal *khiṭāba*, the social *khiṭāba*, which was delivered at social clubs and parties (and which covered various social and humanitarian topics) developed in essence and in prestige.

Although the *khiṭāba* developed greatly as a modern form of literature, it cannot be said that Egypt initiated it without a prior source. The political and social *khiṭāba* did exist during the *Jāhiliyya* and Islamic periods, but faded and withered as the political climate changed in severity. Egypt thus inherited the *khiṭāba* from her past, and then revived and developed it during the nineteenth century. If the *khiṭāba* was not entirely new, then there were other prose forms that Egypt initiated, namely the *maqāla*, *qiṭṭa* and *masraʿiyya* (Dāif 1974: 204).

### 3.3 The *Maqāla* (Essay or Literary Article)

#### 3.3.1 The Origin of the *Maqāla*

The modern *maqāla* was a short literary form that hardly exceeded two or three columns in a newspaper, but the Arabs did not know it in this form. What they knew was a much longer version that took the form of a book. They called it *risāla*, meaning epistle or message, like the *Risāla al-Jāḥi* (The Epistles of Jahiz). During the Abbasid period it was also “known as *al-Fuṭūl* and as *al-Amālī*” (Shayāmī 19995: 21). The *risāla*, again, was borrowed from the Greeks and the Persians who used it as a form of literature in which they addressed the upper level of their respective societies at the time. Charged heavily with *balāgha* devices, the *risāla* “probably arose as a medium for official letters, as written by court secretaries ... The first famous exponent of this genre was “Abd al-Hamid known as al-Katib (d. 750), Persian in origin ...” (Haywood 1971: 11).

The *maqāla*, however, was taken from the West where it was initiated and shaped by the necessities of modern life and the demands of the press. Western writers used it to address not only the high stratum of society, but all levels, irrespective of class, creed or religion. The *maqāla* did not contain profound thought in order that the lowly educated could also understand it. Likewise, it did not consist of embellished language so that it suited the taste of the ordinary people who could not tolerate flowery language. Incidentally, for these same reasons, many writers during the middle to the third quarter of the nineteenth century would not write articles for newspapers. They only did so when they were forced to discard the chains and shackles of *sajʿ* and *badʿ* towards the end of that century (Dāif 1974: 205).

The *maqālāt* that developed could be placed into three categories: political, literary and social.

### 3.3.2 The Political *Maqāla*

As soon as the political *maqāla* without *saj`* and *badī`* was founded, and started to address the people directly about personal and national issues, and began to strongly affect them, the `Urābī revolt (mentioned earlier) broke out. When the leaders of the revolt were banned, the writing of the *maqāla* was banned with them. `Abd Allāh Nadīm, *Shaikh* Muḥammad `Abduh and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī were banished precisely because of the political *maqāla* they wrote in the newspapers. The articles of especially Nadīm were of a high quality and showed his natural talent for the *khiṭāba* written as a *maqāla*. He wrote with such fervour as if it was his personal revolt, becoming one of the rebellion's most eloquent and vociferous protagonists. The topics were predominantly about social reform. More details about him will be furnished later on (3.4.5). The *maqālāt* of *Shaikh* `Abduh were just as effective and were characterised by the strength of expression and a dignified style. His topics were mostly about reformation in the *dīn* and Islamic society, written with tremendous insight and circumspection, at times zealously and at other times with great scrutiny (Dāif 1974: 205-06). Commenting on certain writers' and poets'/poetesses' attempts to rescue the Arabic language from degeneration and to restore the Arabic and Islamic heritage, Gibb justifiably remarked: "Their efforts were powerfully seconded by ... a number of publicists educated in the religious schools, the outstanding figure among whom was *Shaikh* Muḥammad `Abduh (1849 – 1905)" (1963: 159).

In trying to assess and define the contribution and influence of al-Afghānī on Arabic literature, Le Gassick mentions that "his published works are both less voluminous and less revealing than one might have expected from so active and inspiring figure ... only his journalistic materials ... and his `Urwa al-Wuthqā articles and his *Risāla fī Ibṭāl Mathhab al-Dahriyīn* were published in his lifetime" (1979: 26). The Syrian Muḥammad al-Makhzūmī (1868-1930), a man who knew al-Afghānī, penned a book about him with the title *Khaṭīrāt Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī*. There is consensus (notably among Arab scholars) that he is one of the greatest reformers of *Islām*, a leader in the struggle for Eastern independence from Western imperialism, a liberal pan-Arab as well as an Islamic nationalist.

This type of *maqāla* grew and developed as the people's intellect grew and developed. There was a great difference between the *maqālāt* of the generation mentioned above and the generation that followed, namely the generation who would endure and suffer under the

British occupation. Writers of the calibre of Muḥammad Kāmil, *Shaikh* `Alī Yūsuf and Luḥfī al-Sayyid, blew life and power into the political *maqāla*. The *maqālāt* of Muḥammad Kāmil in the newspaper *al-Liwā* were recognised as the most powerful tool with which the Egyptians fought the British occupation. Muḥammad himself was undoubtedly the leader of Egypt's nationalist movement at the time. He was an orator of the highest degree and a political writer of the finest calibre. He woke the people up from their political slumber, inflamed their consciousness with nationalistic feelings, and shouted into their ears and the ears of the Western world the illegality of the British occupation and the birthright of the Egyptian people to live a decent and dignified life. *Shaikh* `Alī Yūsuf strongly defended *Islām* and the East with fiery *maqālāt* in his newspaper *al-Mu`ayyid*, whipping up the people's emotions against the iniquitous occupation. Luḥfī al-Sayyid, again, published his *maqālāt* in the *al-Jarīda*, calling for the education of the populace so that they could regain their stolen rights from the occupying aggressors. "Luḥfī al-Sayyid ... influenced countless of youth with his opinions, and ... they would become the leaders in the fight for freedom and in the revolutions" (Qāsim 2001: 15). Alongside them was Muḥammad Luḥfī al-Manfalūḥī who excelled in, and became famous for, his social *maqāla*. He would charm the readers with his sensitive, unique style, propagate the meaning of mercy and virtue in society, and eloquently describe the misery and suffering of the wretched.

The political *maqāla* would develop even further in depth and scope during the third stage or with the third generation who grew up after the First World War. The independence given to Egypt by Britain after the war on 28 February 1922, and the concomitant mushrooming of political parties, doubled the activity in political essay writing. Great battles would ensue. The best representatives of this generation were Amīn al-Rāfi'ī, `Abbās al-`Aqqād, Muḥammad ḥusain Haikal, `Abd al-Qādir ḥamza, Tāhā ḥusain and Ibrāhīm `Abd al-Qādir al-Māzinī. Their political articles used to captivate the people, and they varied from author to author according to each one's personality, style and ability of clear expression (Dāif 1974: 205-06).

### 3.3.3 The Literary and Social *Maqāla*

The literary *maqāla* developed simultaneously with its political sister. This type of essay dealt with literary and cultural issues. It did not take long for various magazines, weekly or monthly, to appear. They would exclusively deal with literature and culture. The most notable ones were *al-Muqtaḥif* (The Choice) and *al-Hilāl*. Many others like *al-*

*Siyāsiyya al-Usbū`iyya*, *al-Ballāgh al-Usbū`ī* (The Weekly Informer), *al-Risāla* and *al-Thaqāfa* would follow.

This type of *maqāla* had a major influence on the Egyptian and other Arab countries' literary life. It went through the same three stages of development as the political *maqāla*. During the nineteenth century it grew simply and uniformly and afterwards the second generation developed it to include Western ethics, social issues and various philosophical ideas. Newspapers and magazines, for example *al-Muqtaṭif*, would describe European scientific and social theories to the Egyptians specifically and to the Arab world generally. The literary *maqāla* would reach a state of art and great usefulness with the third generation, the generation of Haikal, al-`Aqqād, Ṭāhā Ḥusain and al-Māzinī. Their *maqālāt* would touch the hearts and stir the emotions. They would extend them to intensive research on literature, critique, the arts, and to philosophical and social theories. They were guided in their works by the great ideal model of humankind, the model of goodness, truth and beauty. Many subsequent writers followed this model, for example Taufīq al-Ḥakīm who wrote his *maqālāt* to convey the spirit of Western thought and their literary doctrines and social ideologies. The writers did not only print their articles in the papers, which could be thrown away, but also compiled and published them in the form of books so that they could remain for the generations to come. Al-Māzinī's *ḥiṣṣad al-Hāshim* (Gleanings, 1925) were "often reprinted and used in schools" and put him "in the forefront of essayists on literary and general cultural subjects ... Omar Khayyam, Shakespeare, Mutanabbi, and 'imitation of old writers'" (Haywood 1971: 208).

Reference must here be made to the social *maqālāt* of Muḥammad Ḥādiq al-Rāfi`ī and Aḥmad Amīn. Al-Rāfi`ī would excel with his profound penetrating mind, helped by the fact that he became deaf at an early age. It seemed that his deafness sharpened his mind and perceptions. Amīn, again, excelled with his profuse contemplative and deductive abilities, helped by the extensive culture he acquired. He would criticize various aspects of society, not in a severe, resentful way like a preacher, but in a calm, pleasant and interesting way (Dāif 1974: 207).

### 3.4 The Qiṣṣa (Short Story) and Uqṣūṣa (Novel)

#### 3.4.1 The Origins of the Qiṣṣa and Uqṣūṣa

The *qiṣṣa* (plural: *qiṣṣat* or *qaṣaṣ*) was not entirely new in Arabic literature. In *Jāhilī* literature there were many stories about the Arabs and their battles, in the *Qur'ān* were

various tales about the Prophets and the people they were sent to, and during the Abbasid period many stories about foreign nations were translated, the most famous being *Kalīla wa Dimna* (by Ibn al-Muqaffa') and *Alf Laila wa Laila* (One Thousand and One Nights). Various versions of the latter crystallized from "Sanskrit and Persian models in the tenth century" (Bateson 1967: 2.332)

However, the Abbasid stories and those of the Islamic peoples afterwards were predominantly in the local colloquial languages. They, therefore, did not belong to the classical Arabic literature. The *maqāma* (mentioned previously in section 2.2.8.3), a story that related the adventures of a writer (*adīb*) who captivated and fascinated his listeners with his quick-wittedness and eloquence of expression, was an exception. Owing to its importance in the development of the *qiṣṣa* and *uqūṣa*, a brief exposition of the *maqāma* is appropriate here (see also section 3.4.2 below). *Maqāma* is sometimes translated as 'assembly' and in French as 'séance'. The hero of the story, an adventurous, witty, shrewd and well-versed vagabond, gained rich rewards by astounding and enlisting the sympathies of his audience with inventive narratives. In the various situations (*maqāma*) of his wanderings around the world, he happened to meet the same acquaintance (also a traveller) repeatedly. The latter is always introduced as the *rāwī* (narrator). Badī' al-Zamān (Aḥmad al-Hamaḥānī, d. 1007), the originator of the *maqāma*, and those who followed him like Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim ibn 'Alī al-ḥarīrī (d. 1121), did not intend to create a real story (known as an *uqūṣa*, plural: *aqāṣī*) – their aim was rather educational, namely the compilation of groups of styles embellished with *saj'* and *badī'* (Dāif 1974: 237 and Goldziher 1966: 86).

The *maqāma* was the only connection the novel (*qiṣṣa* / *uqūṣa*) had with classical Arabic. The tales of the *qiṣṣa* were mostly written in the colloquial language, as can be seen in many Egyptian folk stories like 'Antara, *Qiṣṣa Hilāliyya*, *Qiṣṣa al-Zāhir Berbers wa Thāt al-Himma*, *Saif bin Thī Yazan* and *Fairūz Shah*. Many other stories were 'Egyptianised' (that is, written in Egyptian colloquial and with Egyptian names), for example *Alf Laila wa Laila* and the more recent ones of that time by 'Alī al-Zaibiq and Aḥmad al-Danaf (Dāif 1974: 208).

### 3.4.2 The *Maqāma*

The *uqūṣa* passed through a stage which could be regarded as the 'preparation stage' before it would take the form as was known to the Westerner. When it was written on the European style, it went through many experimental stages and was subjected to various general influences (Būqarī 1979: 39).

The *maqāma* was actually the first step which Egypt took towards the *uq* □ū□a, and then the *maqāma* itself developed into another form, very different from its former appearance, but still maintaining its main inherent characteristics of the *maqāma*.

The appearance of the *maqāma*, like the revival and initiation of all types of literature in Egypt (as described in chapters one and two), can be attributed to two principle factors:

The first one was the movement to research the Arabic heritage and the concomitant revival of ancient, classical works, and the return to the literary models (in both poetry and prose) of the *izdihār* (the period when Arabic literature flourished). The printing press, as was detailed before, played a major role in this research as it facilitated the provision of many books from the Arab heritage to the general public. The movement for the revival of the Arabic heritage followed closely on the heels of the establishment of these presses, as did various educational and science societies which distributed vast amounts of classical literature (Būqarī 1979: 39).

The appearance of the *maqāma* was thus part of the Arabic research movement. It was felt that the *maqāma* had “the authority of a native Arabic literary form which might be developed into drama or into an Arab novel” (Bateson 1967: 2.332). Some orientalist also participated in the research and publication of the *maqāma*. Dusās, for example, distributed the *maqāmāt* of al-□arīrī in Europe and also translated them during the time of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (Būqarī 1979: 39).

The second factor was the role of the newspapers. The modern *maqāmāt* in Egypt were first published by newspapers and magazines because of the newspapers’ interest in them and because of their suitability with respect to size and means to educate the populace about many issues (whether scientific, literary, or social) related to that period. In other words, the *maqāma* was ideal to use as a *maqāla* (newspaper article). Some newspapers mixed up the terms *maqāla* and *maqāma* and would call the latter *maqāla* (Būqarī 1979: 39). This was probably because individual *maqāmāt* “differ considerably, at times resembling an essay, at times a learned article, at times a short story – or an essay with an anecdotal element” (Haywood 1971: 291).

Egypt was not the first to initiate the *maqāma* in its present form for Lebanon, through the new works of Nā□if al-Yāzījī (1800-71) and A□mad Fāris al-Shidyāq (1805-87) in the field of the *maqāma*, preceded her to it. “... (They) are famed for books antique in form and style: but by their brilliant manipulation of the Arabic language, they pointed the way to future possibilities” (Haywood 1971: 43). Al-Shidyāq, who converted to *Islām*, was a delegate to Egypt (as a translator for the Americans, it is believed) and influenced literary

events there. He entered journalism, succeeding al-Taḥāwī as editor of *al-Waqāi' al-Miṣriyya*. He had a “great sense of humour – humour often piercing and satirical. ... His very name Shidyāq is so un-Arabic as to be easily remembered: it is from the Greek, and means a sub-deacon or chorister” (Haywood 1971: 53). One of his books contained *maqāmāt* with the peculiar title *al-Sāq `alā al-Sāq fimā huwa al-Fāriyāq* (Leg over Leg concerning what Fariyāq is) which was a brilliant autobiography (some would say a travel book). According to Le Gassick *al-Sāq* is “the most brilliant and provocative work in Arabic prose of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both its style and subject matter are lively and intriguing ... this book is greatly enhanced by the author’s linguistic artistry ... (it) in a sense provides an attempt at bridging the different styles and form of Arabic literature. It combines some of the linguistic elegance, wit, and anecdotal skill of the classical genius al-Jahiz, with lines of poetry and rhymed prose so favored in later Arabic literature” (1979: 14). These *maqāmāt* played a major role in the molding of the *maqāma* during the second stage of its development. A study of his works gives one insight into, and understanding of, the development of the writing style (for example the gradual movement to free literature from the styles of *saj`* and *badī`*) and the topics of the *maqāma*.

His book contained four *maqāmāt*, namely *Fī Maqāma*, *Fī Maqāma Muq`ada*, *Fī maqāma Muqayyima*, and *Fī Maqāma Maṣṣhiyya*. Al-Shidyāq hated *saj`* severely although he sometimes used it himself. His *maqāmāt* were very intricate and involved because he relied on the style which was in mode at the time, but all of them bore the signs of a writer who was adept with the language and who could be highly critical of others. Haywood is of the opinion that although he was addicted to rhymed prose, there was “a tug-of-war between the ornate and the simple” and “In style, ... he was torn between the simplicity apt to journalism and the *maqama* style demanded in fine literature” (1971: 57-8).

His first *maqāma* (*Fī Maqāma*) was of an educational nature. His second one (*Fī Maqāma Muq`ada*) was the most complicated, and its meanings and vocabulary were at times so unclear that its six pages needed about fifty pages of explanation. In *Fī Maqāma Muqayyima* he defended the woman from those who found only fault with her, and *Fī Maqāma Maṣṣhiyya* was also about women. His aim was to educate (Būqārī 1979: 40-42). To his credit are also “philological works ranging from grammars of French and English for Arabs, to complex works on Arabic lexicography. These weighty works are important in the history of Arabic dictionary-writing. Shidyāq was a pioneer of modern Arabic lexicography” (Haywood 1971: 56).

As for the Egyptians who wrote the *maqāma*, one finds that the magazine *Raḍa al-Madāris* (first issued in 1870) was the first to take an interest in it. Many writers contributed



articles towards this magazine, each one with an own style, and each one finding a method to benefit from the reigning atmosphere of the *maqāma* of that period to explain what needed to be explained. Once again, there was confusion between the use of the terms *maqāma* and *maqāla*: some writers' pieces were called *maqāmāt* while they were actually *maqālāt*, and vice versa.

The contributions of ʿĀli Majdī, ʿAbd Allāh (Pāsha) Fikrī and Aḥmad Fatḥī Bek were significant. In short, it can be said that Majdī's *maqāmāt* or *maqālāt* were moral and educational in scope, that the topics were determined by circumstances in his society and that he was significantly influenced by the movement to revive the Arabic heritage. The *maqāmāt* of Fikrī differed from that of Majdī in two ways : firstly, he mentioned that he translated them and, secondly, they all revolved around man / woman as a human being and the 'inner kingdom' of man / woman (that is, the human body, where the characters, environment and props were the five senses, the heart and soul, and the good and bad which reside in the self, like beauty, purity, animal desires, jealousy, covetousness, anger, love, greed, love of position and power, forgetfulness, honor, justice, and so forth). His style was narrative but, like all other *maqāmāt*, contained some *sajʿ* (Būqarī 1979: 42-48).

ʿAbd Allāh Fikrī was the first writer to 'free' Arabic prose from the shackles of *sajʿ* and embellished language by moving towards simple, aesthetically welcome and charming expression and style. He used two methods in his prose: the first, and most dominant, was the style which was welcoming for its expression and musicality, its choice of words, poetic imagination, and precise meanings. This was in contrast to that of al-Qādī al-Fādil, Badīʿ al-Zamān, al-Khawārizmī, or Ibn al-ʿAmīd. His second style was the easy, uncomplicated style which glided with ordinary words, the style of the press at the time (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 11-12).

There were many others who wrote on various topics like love and religion, but it would suffice to summarize the value and the importance of the *maqāma* in as far as it foreshadowed the *qiṣṣa* and the *uqṣūʿa* as follows:

1. The *maqāma* was used as a means to educate and to present various types of information.
2. It became a means for moral training and a call to virtue.
3. The events in the *maqāmāt* were derived from the people's taste for excitement and adventure and therefore *mufājaʿāt* (surprises) and *uqad* (singular *uqda*,

‘climax’ or ‘twist’) in the plots abounded.

4. The ending of the story was predictable since the beginning. If, for example, the title had to do with ‘conquer’, then we could be sure that the hero would win in the end, or if the title had ‘suicide’ in it, the story would end with a suicide.

The last three features would also appear in the first *aqāṭī*, with slight variations here and there (Būqarī 1979: 47-49).

### 3.4.3 The Move towards the Western *Qitā'a*

When Egypt's relations with Europe started (with the arrival of Napoleon) and the people became aware of the Western literature he brought with him, the writers began to translate this literature. As related before, the leader of that translation movement was Rafā'a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī. He translated Fenelon's 'The Adventures of *Telemaque*' and called it *Mawāqī' al-Aflāk fī Waqā' Tilmāk* (roughly translated as 'The Position of the Stars for the Tale-bearer Telemaque'), thus becoming a pioneer of the novel in Arabic. It could be noticed from this change in title that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was still chained to the use of *saj'* and *badī'*. He translated the story that was written in an easy and simple style into a difficult and intricate style. He did not stick to the original, except for its general spirit, but gave himself the liberty to change names and meanings, to add his opinions about education and system of government, and to use Egyptian folk parables and proverbs and Arabic wise sayings. But above all, his Arabic style "while not merely functional or conversational, is straight forward. Despite his knowledge of French, with its clarity, Tahtawi's prose is Arabic in feeling as well as language" (Haywood 1971: 34).

### 3.4.4 Translations

The role that translations of Western literature played in the progress of the *qitā'a* cannot be emphasised enough. Being one of the central forces in the evolution of modern Arabic literature, the space devoted to it will not appear excessive. Before the reign of Muḥammad 'Alī there were no translations from Arabic into other languages; in fact, the entire Mameluke period passed by without efforts to translate, whether from Arabic or Turkish. Nor were there any attempts in the reverse direction.

It was through Muḥammad 'Alī's desires and efforts that translation became a cultural

and important activity. He also speeded up the whole process by taking the following measures:

1. If a book, for example, would take three months to translate, he would divide the book into three parts and order three persons to do it so that it would be done in one month.
2. He encouraged the translators by giving each one gifts and financial rewards and by printing their works and distributing them in schools and government departments.
3. On the return of the student delegations from France, he would receive them in his palace and prevent them from leaving until they had completed a translation in their field of study. Thereafter he would order it to be printed by the Būlāq Printing Press and then had it distributed.
4. He followed closely the availability of books on specific topics. Immediately on hearing of one, he would send someone to locate and buy it. He would have it printed in order that people could reap its benefits.

Translations were done into two languages, Arabic and Turkish. Books on warfare were translated into the latter because most of the military men and students were Turkish or from the Mamelukes. The rest was translated into Arabic (Būqārī 1979: 25-26).

As for the translation of literature from other languages, very little took place during the time of Muḥammad `Alī. Of the few available were ‘The Divine Comedy’ of Dante, some books of Voltaire and Jean Jacques Roussouw, and a collection of French stories (Būqārī 1979: 27). The reason for this seemed to have been that Muḥammad `Alī was a practical and military man and therefore concentrated on the translation of books which were of practical and military value.

Although the initial ‘translation movement’ did not include much literature as such, this translation heritage did open the eyes of the educationists, especially during the time of Ismā`īl, to the Arabic heritage of which the *uqūḍ* was part of. It impelled them to start translating *aqāḍ* and it was the newspapers which were the ideal vehicle (in fact, the only vehicle) to propagate and spread them (Būqārī 1979: 28). In this respect, al-Tāhir and Ismā`īl (1974: 3) identified three ‘movements’: “a party who imitated only their Arab predecessors, a group who emulated only the Western scholars, and a third class of writers-cum-translators

who mixed the Islamic/Arabic culture and European arts”.

#### 3.4.4.1 The Reasons for Translating *Aqāṭī* during that Period

There are two major reasons for translating *Aqāṭī*:

1. One group of educators felt that the aim of translating *aqāṭī* should be for reading pleasure and enjoyment and nothing else. They would state this very clearly in their forwards to the stories which they translated, whether from English or other languages. This way of thinking, naturally, influenced the choice of story which would be presented to the reader. The translator did not bother about the artistic standard of the story, or did not care whether the events described were at all possible to happen, or about the depth of the psychological analysis of its characters. All of this never occurred to the translators of the time.

This limited view of the aim of writing a story and its translation, of course, had its consequences. The translators depended on the taste of the people in their translations and, because of the people's lack of education and ignorance as mentioned previously, their taste was subject to superstition and adventure. The people's taste was thus influencing, rather than being influenced, by the choice of story. Stated in another way, the translator was searching for what satisfied the readers' tastes, not for what could raise the standard of those tastes. The result was that the adventure story, which satisfied these tastes, spread widely (Būqarī 1979: 28-30).

2. The second stream believed that the *uqūṭa* should be used as one of the means to teach, educate, improve, and guide. This aim was usually annotated at the end of the story by either a warning about something or by encouraging the doing of something else (Būqarī 1979: 32).

If one looks at these stories from another angle, that is, from an artistic point, then one finds that they actually represented the Romantic Movement (Būqarī 1979: 34). They also dealt a lot with self-analysis, bravery, love and other emotions, thoughts and reflections, and unexpected romantic happenings. Most translations were from works of famous French writers, e.g. Maupassant, Francois Coppée, and Bordeaux.

### 3.4.4.2 General Characteristics of the Translations

After the brief presentation of the translation of stories which were printed in the newspapers and magazines or published as books, one can summarize the most salient features of those stories as follows:

1. The aim of the translations was either educational or recreational.
2. The topics, plots and themes of the majority were romantic in nature, and based on excitation and exaggeration.
3. The choice of story depended on the taste of the people. The populace had to be satisfied above all else in what was translated and written.
4. Translations were done from all the major languages such as English, French, Italian, Spanish and Russian, although most translations were done from the former two.
5. No mention was made in the translated books that they were translations. The only indications that they were translations were the names of the characters and the places where the story occurred (Būqarī 1979: 36).

### 3.4.4.3 The Translation of Books

Besides the many stories which were published in newspapers and magazines, some books were also translated, and it seemed that most of them consisted of collections of stories, some of which first appeared in newspapers as well, and then gathered in book form. The aims of its translation were the same as that for the short stories. Amongst the most famous of these collections were those of Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī by the name of *al-`Abarāt*. Other well-known collections were Maḥmūd Taimūr's *Ma Tarāhu al-`Uyun* (What the Eyes See) and ʿĀhir Lāshin's *Fī Sakhariyya al-Nās* (The Object of the People's Ridicule).

Thus, as H.A.R. Gibb put it: "In addition to journalism and original writing, a vital

part in the development of modern Arabic literature was played by the translation of western literary works. These served not only as exercises in expanding the range of Arabic literary expression, but also as models, since not a few translators tried their hands at original compositions of the same kinds” (1963: 160).

### 3.4.5 The Role of `Abd Allāh Nadīm, Adīb Isḡāq, the Arabic Heritage and the *Muhājirūn*

Besides his political *maqālāt* (as mentioned in 3.3.2), al-Sayyid `Abd Allāh Nadīm was one of the most important writers who wrote the narrative essay (*maqāla qaḡaḡiyya*) in the form of a long narrative *uqḡūḡa* (novel). He composed the book *al-Tabkīt wa al-Tankīt* (literally meaning ‘Mocking and Remorse’). Ever since its publication in 1881 he persevered in writing his social *maqālāt* in the manner of the *aqāḡī*.

Its first edition was filled with instructional guidance written in story form according to the *uqḡūḡa* structure. He would sometimes clearly point out his aim at the conclusion of the story, for example, “This is the condition of he who does not get moral training since small: he becomes the prisoner of his desires, unable to grasp meaning, a coward, stupid and foolish” (quoted in Būqarī 1979: 63). The events do not follow a logical sequence because his aim was not to write an *uqḡūḡa* but a social *maqāla*. The character sketches were not complete and natural either. The stories, therefore, had no artistic value (Būqarī 1979: 62-63).

The educational and moral aim thus continued to appear and disappear according to the writers’ ability, or lack of ability, to understand the value of the *uqḡūḡa* and its fundamental assets (Būqarī 1979: 64).

`Abd Allāh Nadīm was one of the most important contributors to the development of the *maqāla*, together with `Abd Allāh Fikrī (mentioned previously in 3.4.2) and Adīb Isḡāq and the inspirational speeches and books of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and *Shaikh Muḡammad `Abduh*. He was a kind of genius and wrote in the paper *al-Tankīt wa al-Tabkīt* about social reform, in the *al-Latā`if* (Witticisms) about the *al-`Urābī* revolt, and in the *al-Ustāth* about political and social reform. His writing style closely resembled his oratory style which revealed a rare talent. For a long time he wrote in the imitative (*ḡana`*) and rhythmic prose (*badī`*) manner, then he changed to easy and simple (*mursal*) prose and the journalistic (*uḡufī*) style. His journalistic style in *al-Ustāth* became an example copied and followed by the writing fraternity and editors of newspapers and magazines of his time and afterwards, whether it was in his political and social topics or in his powerful, easy style (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 15-16).

Adīb Isḡāq (1856-1885), a contemporary of al-Nadīm and *Shaikh Muḡammad*

`Abduh, and a student of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, represented a major stage in the evolution of modern prose. He concerned himself with ideas and expression, moved from the subjective to the objective, made all aspects of life a milieu for his pen, steered away from *saj`* as far as possible, and established the fundamental principles of the *maqāla* for writers who did not distinguish between *maqāla* and *maqāma* and who spent all their energy in writing long prefaces and introductions. He used to abide by structure and organization in his *maqālāt*. Although he strived for objectivity, his subjectivity was still apparent because he expressed his personal opinions about the topic that he was writing about. He would sometimes exaggerate for he divided his *maqāla* into paragraphs and assigned each one a number so that the reader would not get lost (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 13-14).

Although Adīb Isḡāq called for the discarding of the *saj`* and *badī`* style, he himself, out of habit, still indulged in them. There was thus still a need for true simplicity in style, a style which could paint all shades of feeling, thought and experience with beautiful, musical and clear expression. This man would be Muḡāfā Luḡfī al-Manfālūḡī (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 15).

Alongside the movement of Nadīm and Isḡāq, another movement developed due to the revival of the Arabic heritage on the one hand and the reading of some Western *aqāḡīḡ* on the other. The newspapers found that the model which the Western *uqḡūa* presented was not present in Arabic literature, and that the writers were unable to imitate it, so they were pushed towards some Arabic stories which occurred during the early periods of *Islām*. Also, the writing style in newspapers and magazines began to develop bit by bit and the writers felt the need for a more simplified style, a style which agreed with the taste of its readers. So they abstained to a large extent from using the *saj`* and *maqāma* styles, although they reappeared ever so often (as was mentioned previously).

As an example of this movement, called the 'Islamic movement' by ḡamza Muḡammad Būqarī, one found the magazine *al-Falāḡ* (1886) writing many stories about al-Rashīd, al-Barāmika and other past Islamic personalities. In similar vein it was found that *al-Laḡā'if* (also issued in 1886) utilized the stories narrated in the ancient books, for example the battles of the early Muslims and those during the ensuing years, and the story of `Umar ibn al-Khaḡāb (the second *khalīfa* in *Islām*) and the poor old lady and her small children. Other writers utilized the wise sayings and religious admonitions from classical literature. These examples showed that the aim was still moral and educational. The people were expected to be inspired by the vivid pictures and examples of Arab and Islamic history (1979: 66).

Another famous paper *al-`Urwa al-Wuthqā* (named after an expression in the *Qur`ān*

and which means ‘The Strong Handhold’ or ‘something that secures a load firmly’ – in this case *Islām*) published various stories about the history of *Islām*, stories like ‘*Ām al-Fīl*’ (Year of the Elephant), *al-Maulūd al-Nabī* (Birth of the Prophet), *Khātim al-Nabuwwa* (Final Prophethood), *Tijāra al-Rasūl li Khadīja Sayyida Quraish* (The Business run by the Messenger for Khadīja, lady of *Quraish*). These stories, written in the true style of the *qiṣṣa*, clearly illustrated the spiritual and sovereign power and pervasive influence of *Islām*, which Egypt needed at that time too (Būqarī 1979: 65-66).

A further movement was initiated in the papers by the Syrian and Lebanese ‘emigrators’ (*muhājirūn*). These *muhājirūn* were the first to publish the modern *uqṣūṣa* according to the Western model. Many collections of *aqāṣīṣ* saw the light of day in the magazines and papers, and they moved in a specific direction, but the most salient features can be summarized as follows:

1. They represented one type of *uqṣūṣa*, namely the novel with a climax.
2. The psychological analysis of the heroes was so to say lost and the emphasis was only on the event(s).
3. The events did not follow a logical sequence; the suspense and twists were more important.
4. The presentation of twists and the ending were known to regular readers of *aqāṣīṣ*. The concepts of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ and the struggle between them were very conspicuous and ‘good’ mostly, if not always, prevailed over ‘evil’.
5. The educational aim was social, but they fell short on the issues about women, the problem of poverty, and the power of fathers over their daughters.
6. The *uqṣūṣa* treated the love story quite extensively and this from a ‘romantic’ angle. The endings were frequently melodramatic, as when two lovers commit suicide, or when one of them dies, then the other will follow suit.
7. They also indulged in the ‘police adventure’, which was a result of translations of Western narratives. The people’s taste played a great role in the run of the events in this type of narrative; in fact, their taste determined the choice in the story to be



translated (Būqarī 1979: 66-67).

The orientalist took a great interest in these *aqāṭī*, stories like *Alf Laila wa Laila*. They would collect and publish them. Some books appeared to be translations but were not; others which appeared to be original were in fact translations. Some of them did not have the date of publication while yet others did not have the original writer's name on it (Būqarī 1979: 72-73).

The two movements, Islamic and *muhājirūn*, continued to spread their influence, the latter leaning towards the 'romantic, emotional stories, and the former promoting the 'social *aqāṭī*' by utilizing the *qiṭa* as a *maqāla* on social issues (Būqarī 1979: 77).

Some writers exclusively used magazines as a vehicle for their articles and stories. The *maqāla* or *uqū'a* printed in this fashion generally did not concern itself with the artistic aspect of the narrative, for there were no central events and the characters were not complete or sketched with due care. Even the titles indicated that they were social issues and not *aqāṭī*, for example an *uqū'a* would have the title 'Which should get Preference as *Hijāb*: a Woman's Face or her Voice?' (Būqarī 1979: 76, 80)

#### 3.4.6 The 'Egyptianizing' of the *Qiṭa*

Rafā'a al-Ṭahāwī was not only a translator, but also an 'Egyptianizer' of the *qiṭa*, that is, he translated the Western story into Egyptian Arabic and substituted names of characters and settings with Egyptian equivalents. This 'Egyptianizing' would continue long after him. Subsequent writers did possess the ability and the means to move away from the *saj'* and *badī'* of al-Ṭahāwī and his contemporaries, but because they wanted to satisfy the tastes of their readers, they still clung to the old style and expression. In fact, some writers like Muḥammad 'Uthmān Jalāl preferred to use the Egyptian colloquial in their *qiṭa*.

There were, however, those writers who 'Egyptianised' the *qiṭa* using classical Arabic, thereby balancing the scales. The most famous at the beginning of the twentieth century were Ḥafīz Ibrāhīm and Muḥafā Luḥfī al-Manfalūḥ. Ibrāhīm translated, or more precisely 'Egyptianised', Victor Hugo's 'The Wretched'. He did not abide by the original, except to the main story line, but took the liberty of translating freely and adding passages that were not there originally. Perhaps the works of al-Manfalūḥ in 'Egyptianising' Western *qiṭa* was more extensive than that of Ḥafīz. He did not know anything about the French language, but depended on someone to read the French stories to him, and then he would relate the stories as heard, in Arabic. He would then even change the title, for example

he named *Paul et Virginie*, written by Bernardin de St. Pierre, *al-Faḡīla* (Virtue or Moral Excellence). The stories would bear no resemblance to the original. Likewise, they lost their short story structure. The main aim was not the story itself, but the description of the different shades of emotions of its characters, and to employ a style which was easy, relaxed and eloquent (Dāif 1974: 208-09).

### 3.4.7 The Growth and Advancement of the *Maqāma* and *Qiṣṣa*

The writers who followed would attempt to produce original works based on the Western model. The first two significant ones were, as mentioned before (2.2.8.3), *ʿadīth ʾIsā ibn Hishām* which was written in the *maqāma* style, and *Zainab*. Because of its pioneering effort, more will be said about al-Muwailaḥ's *ʿadīth ʾIsā ibn Hishām* (and other similar works) in the paragraphs that follow. Muḥammad Ḥusain Haikal's *Zainab* was the first genuine and complete attempt at writing the Arabic *qiṣṣa* according to the Western model (Dāif 1974: 209). He described the life of the Egyptian village and the peasants in a way which none of his predecessors did. His book reflected a very accurate picture of Egypt's rural way of life (Dāif 1974: 274). The theme behind the story was the danger of outworn customs – in this case, the parentally arranged marriage, which was normal in those days. Other rural abuses also came to light in the story, and the language was free from artificiality, and the dialogue of peasants used Egyptian colloquialisms (Haywood 1971: 136). Haikal steered away from the use of *saj`* and *badī`*, and used the colloquial only in the dialogues of the villagers (Dāif 1974: 277). Years later Muḥammad Taimūr would compile and publish original short stories under the name of *Mā Tarāhu al-ʿUyūn*. These stories were characterised by their realism, their precise description of emotions and their perfect short story structure. After World War One many writers, who could write stories masterfully and skilfully, appeared. One of them was Maḥmūd Taimūr, brother of the above-mentioned Muḥammad. Another was Maḥmūd Lāshin who compiled *Sakhariyya al-Nās* (The People's Object of Ridicule) and *Yuḡkā Anna* (It is Related that). His stories excelled with their truly Egyptian spirit and their ability to accurately and realistically describe characters in serious or comical situations (Dāif 1974: 210).

The *maqāma* evolved according to the spirit of the times and harmonized with what was newly discovered in literature. The translation of long story narratives must get a lot of credit for this advancement. Writers especially modeled the form of their *maqāmāt* on that of the long narratives. This form, however, did not hide its origins and old tendencies. Books that seemed as if they were long narratives and connected from beginning to end by

the same theme appeared on the scene. The most important of them were the above-mentioned *ʿadīth* *ʿĪsā bin Hishām*, together with *Layālī Satī* (Nights Unfolding) by *ʿāfi* Ibrāhīm, and *Layālī al-Rū al-ʿāʾir* (Nights of the Perplexed Soul) by Muḥammad Luḥfī Jumuʿa (Būqarī 1979: 49).

These stories appeared to be connected episodes, but were really individual events, every event talking about a separate topic. What bound them together was one common link, namely the topic of social issues which people cared about. This was not surprising because the conditions in the society, which were briefly referred to elsewhere (3.1), were in need of solutions, and new issues concerning the confusing conditions in the society, arose and had to be discussed, debated, and solved.

The above-mentioned works clearly differed from the *maqāmāt* which preceded them, in the following respects:

1. The type of adventure and surprises which characterized the previous *maqāmāt* had disappeared – especially those which were meant to admonish and guide the reader.
2. The educational type which dealt with grammatical principles and religious law almost disappeared.
3. These *maqāmāt* in its narrative presentation avoided the influence of the populace's taste on the unfolding of events. The event was not given undue significance unless there was a connection between the event and the treatment of the social issue or ideas of the people.
4. The expected ending (as mentioned under the discussion of the literature of the *émigré* writers) also disappeared due to its relative unimportance to the social writers who tried to solve the problems of the day (Būqarī 1979: 49-50).

These positive developments did not end there – the *maqāmāt* would evolve even further as will be seen in the discussion of the works of the ensuing generation with respect to the *uqūḍ*.

Returning to the book *ʿadīth* *ʿĪsā ibn Hishām*, the following salient remarks can be made : it was non-fiction, its aim was to educate and inform and thereby try to solve social problems, it consisted of *sajʿ* (rhymed prose), *ibāq* (juxtaposition of contrasting ideas) and

*muqābala* (comparison and collation), it was a social *maqāma* which closely resembled the *maqāla* written in a narrative style, it actually did not succeed in its social and reform intentions, the events in it were not important in themselves, but they pointed to the shortcomings and immoral opinions prevalent in the society, and finally, the *maqāma* lost its point of climax (*uqda*) totally while the *uqda* was regarded as important in the novel by most writers, especially in the psychological thrillers which depended on analysis more than anything else. The book can be regarded as valuable, not as a work of art (because it did not conform to all the fundamental requirements of the *qitā'a*), but for its treatment of various social problems.

Ibrāhīm's book, *Layāli Sa'ī*, also discussed various social, political and literary issues, but, being a poet too, Ibrāhīm treated the topics in a poetic style. It consisted of individual events (*layāli*, nights), the common thread being the social issues being discussed. Like al-Muwaila'ī, he also concerned himself with the social issues of the veil (*ijāb*) and whether it should be discarded, the worshipping at shrines and the building of domes on graves. He made less use of *saj`* than al-Muwaila'ī.

The book by Mu'ammad Lu'fi Jumu'a, *Layāli al-Rū' al-ā'ir*, also, as the title indicates, consisted of episodes (*layāli*) where every 'night' treated a different topic. It differed, however, from 'āfi's and al-Muwaila'ī's in that it contained no *saj`* whatsoever, that the stories resembled the *aqā'ī* much closer, and that the author's Western culture and his reading of especially French books were clearly discernable. In all the stories clear attempts to compose a novel and leanings towards Romanticism could be noticed.

When the three works are compared, an almost naturally gradual decrease in the use of *saj`* can be discerned: al-Muwaila'ī used it a lot, Ibrāhīm used it occasionally, and Jumu'a discarded it completely (Būqarī 1979: 50-53).

Two other books related to the evolution of the *maqāma* are *Natā'ij al-Aqwāl fī al-Aqwāl wa al-Af'āl* (The Consequences of Words and Deeds) by 'Ā'isha al-Taimūriyya and *Ilm al-Dīn* (The Science of Religion) by 'Alī (Pāsha) Mubārak. The former had the following characteristics:

1. It was closer to the fairy tale type of *uqū'a*
2. The people's taste and the stories which the authoress had read or heard about clearly left its mark on the run of events in the stories.

3. Maybe the authoress derived her material from ‘A Thousand and One Nights’ or other folk stories because the story played out in Iraq, Persia, China, India, Sudan and Yemen.

4. Although the book appeared to be a long story with interconnecting episodes, each section actually had a specific aim in mind, similar to those of al-Muwailaḥī, Ibrāhīm and Jumu’a.

‘Alī Mubārak’s composition was, in a nutshell, an educational and instructional book. It gathered much old as well as new information about both the Arabs and the West. When first opened, it could be thought of as a book on religion, or a book on statistics, or a book on travels. The stories showed no effects of the *maqāmāt* or folk stories – like previous books – but they corresponded to them in that they take the form of the long narrative story, although the stories are cultural in nature and totally independent of one another.

Although Mubārak neglected to write about his society, he did not completely forget them; he did write about the stupidity of the rich and the conditions of the country people and peasants, and the oppression, prejudices and injustices which they endured. It is interesting to remark that this book contained stories within the main story.

Returning to the famous Syrian al-Shidyāq, and his equally famous book *al-Sāq ‘alā al-Sāq*, one must remember that he wrote his book before the five authors mentioned above, and one can safely say that he planted the seeds of the Arabic *uqūḍa*. It was he who started to write about a topic in the form of a narration (*riwāya*), steering away from the *maqāma* style. This was remarkable if one remembers the literary standard his society had held at the time. Writers like the five mentioned above, would follow his example (Būqarī 1979: 55-61).

### 3.4.8 The Social *Qīḥa*

If one looks at the kinds of *qīḥa* that evolved, then two types of *qīḥa* can be discerned: the social *qīḥa* and the historical *qīḥa*. The long social story, which was initiated by Haikal (*Zainab*), would develop and advance by leaps and bounds with Egypt’s literary revival after the First World War. Various writers produced original works, all with their own personal style and characteristics that distinguished them from other writers. They typified the new liberal spirit in Arab thought. The most prominent were Ḥāhā Ḥusain (b. 1889) and al-Māzinī (1890-1949). The former excelled in his description of Egyptian life in

most of his *qaṣa* for example *al-Ayām* ('The Days' or sometimes translated as 'An Egyptian Childhood'), *Du'ā al-Karawān* (The Call of the Plover) and *Shajara al-Bu's* (The Wretched Tree). Other compositions were '*Adīb*' (Man of Letters, subtitled 'A Western Adventure'), *al-Qaṣr al-Masḥūr* (The Bewitched Castle), *al-ḥub al-Dā'i* (Lost Love) and many other works which he co-authored (Al-Bāwī n.d: 62). His *al-Mu'aththibūn fī al-Arṣ* is regarded as the "apex of biographical literature as far as beauty, effect, style, expression, simplicity and eloquence are concerned ..." and his *Riḥla al-Rabī' wa al-ḥaif* as the "best literary example of travel stories" (Shayāmī 1995: 38 & 40). He treated the well-known story of *Shahrazād* from *Alf Laila wa Laila* in his characteristic skilful and charming style. *Al-Ayām* records his childhood in the *kuttāb* (traditional Quranic School), in the Egyptian countryside, then in Cairo, in *al-Azhar*, then in Paris, in the university. In it he describes his thoughts, trials and tribulations, pains, happiness, and his human, social and personal ordeals (Ḥusain 2004), making it a stirring character study and captivating social document wrapped in one. *Al-Ayām* was later written in Arabic braille especially for the blind so that they, in the words of Ḥusain himself, "will experience in it the life of a soul mate in his youth ... and in reading it, I hope my blind friends will find enjoyment and alleviation from the burdens of life as I have found succour in writing it, and that it will encourage them to face the future smilingly ... and so that they will benefit themselves and others, overpowering all difficulties in their way with patience, diligence, forbearance and never-ending hope" (Introduction, Ḥusain 2004: 9). The publishers brought out this issue "in honour of Ṭāhā Ḥusain's great status in our intellectual, literary, social and political life, a status of a leader, pioneer and scholar" (Introduction, Ḥusain 2004: 3). 'The Days' were so popular that the first volume was broadcast as a series over Egypt's public radio during the month of *Ramaḥān* (Al-Dasūqī 2002: 100). It was put to Ḥusain that it seems that 'The Days' was the first autobiography in Arabic literature, but he replied,

It's not the first book, for there was Ibn Khaldūn who wrote about himself in his travels; and this reminds me that I wrote the two volumes ... under the same circumstances: volume one I wrote after the publication of *al-Shi'r al-Jāhilī* and the problems and arguments that followed it ... and I felt dejected and grieved about the unfolding events, so I tried to escape from my depression or to overcome it by writing the first volume. As for the second volume, I wrote it in an attempt to flee from hurtful pain following a verbal altercation with a colleague (Al-Dasūqī 2002: 68-9).

Ḥusain's significant role in and his substantial contribution to the development of modern Arabic literature is succinctly articulated by Doctor Yaḥyā Shayāmī:

We have to point out his excellent championship and patronage of the Arabic language and literature. He was a luminary, a thinker, a scholar, a man of letters, a critic, a social reformer. The cultural insight and progressive ideas he introduced into literature made him a pioneering and creative littérateur. He wrote several different types of essays and short stories, biographies, descriptive travel stories, histories, even poetry and critiques, ... and his criticisms did not stop at literature, but included politics, society, behaviour and religion. In short, he was a witness to and the flagbearer of the intellectual literary revival of his time. It was, therefore, no surprise that he was one of the five winners of the Unesco prize for literature in 1973; sadly, the morning of the day that he passed away (1995: 126).

He would generally become known in the Arab literary world as *`Amīd al-Adab al-`Arabī* “as an honour for the major role he played in the field of literary studies” and affectionately as *Wazīr al-Mā wa al-Hawā* “because as minister of education he decreed that education must be free and available to everybody like water and air” (Al-Ṭāhir & Ismā‘īl 1979: 2).

Ibrāhīm `Abd al-Qādir al-Māzinī concerned himself with the psychological aspects of man and woman in his short stories. He derived his subject matter from Egyptian daily life and his own personal experience of that life. He was a fine stylist and could expertly analyze the society, its customs and habits, the relationships amongst the various people, and their temperament, emotions and sensibilities. He acquired this tendency towards psychological analysis from Western psychological writers. Like them, he would propagate the well-known Western psychological theories in his stories, for example in *‘Ibrāhīm al-Kātib’* (Ibrāhīm the Scribe, published in 1931) and *‘Ud `alā Bad’* (A Return to the Beginning). Gibb, in writing about *Ibrāhīm al-Kātib*, refers to its “defiant cynicism, subtle humour, and crisp and natural dialogue” (quoted in Haywood 1971: 136-7).

`Abbās Maḥmūd al-`Aqqād wrote a story *Sāra* which resembled al-Māzinī’s taste for psychological analysis. Al-`Aqqād’s story consisted of extensive analyses of the characters, and his personal attributes of eloquence in expression and clarity in style would predominate in these analyses. Besides *Sāra*, which was “a novel ... in powerful and sinewy prose” (Badawi 1974: 86), he wrote many political, social, literary and philosophical articles and essays as well as a number of biographies. His works runs into more than ninety volumes.

This type of *qiṣṣa* was almost confined to these two authors only. The generation after them, like Muḥammad Ḥusain Haikal and Ṭāhā Ḥusain, would concentrate on social analysis instead of psychological analysis. After them the foremost writers in this respect would be Taufīq al-ḥakīm (b. 1898 or 1902), Maḥmūd Taimūr (b. 1894) and Najīb Maḥfūf (b. 1911).

Taufīq al-ḥakīm (regarded by some as the finest Arabic author of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) used some events and experiences which he had witnessed in his own life as

subject matter, for example in *Yaumiyyāt Nā'ib fī Aryāf* (The Diary of a Provincial Officer). It recounts in satirical and brilliant language the investigation of a murder by the legal officer and the police. He showed great skill in the use of dialogue, and had the ability to write vivid description in “straightforward, yet witty and occasionally poetical, prose” Haywood 1971: 203). Al-ḥakīm tried to treat some national problems in *ʿAuda al-Rūḥ* (Return of the Soul). His stories had the stamp of general humaneness on them, and simultaneously he seriously tried to describe the world of the Eastern, Egyptian soul. He also excelled in intellectual drama (the drama of ideas or fantasies) and social drama, but we shall deal with that in section 3.5 below.

Maḥmūd Taimūr, again, tackled the shortcomings of Egyptian society in his stories. Although he had his own personal style and character, his works bore a resemblance to that of ḥusain and al-ḥakīm. Some selections of his most famous and much-appreciated short stories and narratives (18), and articles and studies (11) are listed by Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Bāwī (n.d: 54-5). He writes of the Cairo scene, his short stories named in each case after the title and leading characters of one story, for example *al-ḥājj Shalabī* and *al-Shaikh Jumuʿa*. A detailed study of his life and works can be found in Fatḥī al-Abyārī's *Maḥmūd Taimūr – Rāʾid al-Uqūḍ al-ʿArabiyya* (2000).

Najīb Maḥfūḥ's stories were concerned with the middle and lower classes of his society. He described the various circumstances and factors at work in the societal environment that sometimes led to deviant personality traits and perverted behaviour (Dāif 1974: 210-11). He wrote three historical novels, novels of contemporary life, and a collection of short stories called *ḥamās al-Junūn*. His reputation is based on his trilogy *Bain al-Qaḥrain*, *Qaḥr al-Shauq* and *al-Sukkariyya* in which he traces the history of an Egyptian middle-class Muslim family between 1917 and 1944. His attention to detail is brilliant and is skilful in his use of language, “adapting classical syntax fairly freely to suit the modern printed language, with its absence of vowelling. His dialogue is realistic, without using many colloquialisms” (Haywood 1971: 207).

### 3.4.9 The Historical *Qiḥḥa*

Alongside the social *qiḥḥa*, the historical *qiḥḥa* developed as from the beginning of the twentieth century. Tracing the development of the new forms of Arabic literature, Gibb remarked, “... Some progress was made with the novel, particularly in the series of historical novels in the manner of Scott produced by the indefatigable journalist, essayist, and historian



Jurjī Zaidān” (1963: 160 – 61). As mentioned in section 2.2.8.3, Jurjī Zaidān compiled some twenty odd historical short stories in which he described all the major events of the Arabs’ past. Technically speaking, they were not stories, but history narrated in the form of stories. He incorporated love stories in them (historical romances), and wrote about events without any adaptation and without the analysis of human emotions and circumstances. Maybe this was because “... Jurjī Zaidān used the *qiṣṣa* as a means to teach Islamic history ... not as an avenue to present Western cultural thought ... and was therefore more a teacher than a narrator ...” (Qāsim 2001: 14). His historical interests were diverse: he wrote separate books on the history of Arabic literature, Islamic civilization, Greece and Rome, Modern Egypt, Britain, pre-Islamic Arabia, and even Freemasonry in Egypt, prompting Gibb to retort, “It is fully open to question whether his activity was not even more effectual than Muḥammad ‘Abduh’s in leading contemporary Egyptian literature along the path which it has followed” (quoted in Haywood 1971: 134).

Shortly after World War One this type of *qiṣṣa* would ripen and progress. The first to produce a perfect, artistic historical *qiṣṣa* was Muḥammad Farīd Abū ḥadīd with his story *Zanobiā*. He followed it up with other stories: *al-Malik al-ḥalāl wa al-Muhalhal* (The Misguided [or Wandering] and Flimsy King), and then *Juḥā fī Janbulād* (Juha in Janbulad). In all his stories he applied the principles of the *qiṣṣa* very skilfully, and described its characters with deep penetration into their hidden, inner spiritual and psychological being. Many other capable writers, like ‘Alī al-Jārim, Muḥammad Sa’īd al-Aryān and Muḥammad ‘Awaḥ Muḥammad, would write in the same vein (Dāif 1974: 211).

#### 3.4.10 The *Qiṣṣa* Becomes Fully Arabic

Another unexpected factor led to the further growth and blossoming of the *qiṣṣa*: a political and economic war of words broke out between Europe and Egypt. This was the time when Egypt was still under British occupation. The Mediterranean Sea was sealed off, some historians maintained, to choke Egypt’s economic development that was booming at the time due to the trade route through the Suez Canal. Trade would go around The Cape of Good Hope instead of through the Canal. The result, besides the economic ones, was that no Western literature would come to Egypt and the Egyptian writers began to depend on themselves much more than they did previously. The *qiṣṣa* grew profoundly in content and style because the writers no longer relied upon inspiration from the West. They depended on and used their own Egyptian Arabic environment. The *qiṣṣa*, therefore, became an Arabic

and indigenous art in an Egyptian milieu, not an imported Western art measured by and based on Western examples and models.

The number of able writers would also increase tremendously after the final revolt of 23 July 1952 when Egypt successfully evicted the English from their soil. The last English soldier would leave Egypt in 1956. All of these writers found themselves after the victorious uprising and started to eloquently express Egyptian life, with its concomitant social, political and economic events, in the most beautiful and captivating *qiṣṣa* imaginable. Today there are many prominent, innovative Egyptian short story writers, the *qiṣṣa* has a distinct Egyptian flavour, and each writer has his / her own personal style, methodology and way.

The tendency to 'Egyptianize' Western *qiṣṣa* before World War One had ended. It was replaced by a new taste in professional, precise translations. Many publishing houses, societies and foundations played a major role in this respect, for example *Lajna al-Ta'liḥ wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr* (The Committee for Writing, Translation and Publishing), *Dār al-Hilāl* (Crescent Publishing House), *Dār al-Ma'ārif* (Publishing House of Information and Education). Even the Ministry of Education and Teaching played a significant and meaningful role in this regard.

The consequence was that Egypt attained a huge amount of genuine, original Western *qiṣṣa* and, likewise, gained genuine, original Egyptian *qiṣṣa* that were no less beautiful and charming than their Western counterparts (Daif 1974: 211-12).

### 3.4.11 Topics of the Earlier *Maqālāt* and *Qiṣṣa*

As previously mentioned in the introduction (3.1), writers derived their subject material from the society in which they were born and bred. The topics covered mostly social issues, for example the raising of the lower class's educational level. Other topics treated were the 'modern city' which was evolving (those for and those against), the place, position and status of woman - the wearing of the *ijāb* would become a hot issue, as will be seen in the discussion of al-Manfalūḥī (he was a strong defender of the wearing of *ijāb*) - as well as her backwardness which was responsible for her misery and which prevented her from fully participating in the issues of the day, and the issue of forced marriages which amongst others led to suicides and extra-marital affairs, political problems, belief (*'aqīda*) problems (e.g. Islamic thought and nationalism) and, of course, the resistance to the English occupiers. The treatment of all these various topics led, stage by stage, to the production of the short story in one way or another. Strangely, the occupiers indirectly also aided in the advancement of the short essay and story. Cromer believed and propagated the idea that the Muslim

without a European character and morality was unsuitable to rule Egypt and that future government ministers must have a European education. Some newspapers helped him in that they tried to make the Egyptians doubt themselves, their beliefs and their ideas. The reaction was contrary to expectation: many articles appeared refuting these notions and calling loudly for personal freedom and political freedom (Būqārī 1979: 22). The Egyptian attitude to Cromer – indeed, to British influence in general – was revealed in the literature, and this led to the advancement of the essay and short story.

The remarks by Armstrong (2004: 161) about Cromwell give us some insight into why the attitude of colonialists make the subject population experience an occupation as intrusive, coercive and profoundly unsettling, and how it causes rifts in a society and leads the people to internalize the colonialists' negative views of the themselves:

Cromer was a typical colonialist. In his view, the Egyptians were an inherently backward people and needed to be colonized for their own good. ... he assumed that Europe had always been in the vanguard of progress. He did not realize that European countries such as Britain and France had once been as 'backward' as the Middle East, and that he was simply looking at an imperfectly modernized country. He saw 'Orientals' themselves as inherently, genetically flawed....he assumed that Europeans had always been rational, efficient, and modern, while the Orientals were naturally illogical, unreliable, and corrupt. Similarly, Islam 'as a social system was a complete failure,' and incapable of reform or development. It was not possible to resuscitate 'a body which is not, indeed, dead, and which may yet linger on for centuries, but which is nevertheless politically and socially moribund, and whose gradual decay cannot be arrested by any modern palliatives. He made it clear that this chronically retarded country would need direct British supervision for some time.

ʿAbduh, for example, was devastated by the British occupation. He described the modern period as a 'torrent of science' drowning the traditional men of religion:

It is an age which has formed a bond between ourselves and the civilized nations, making us aware of their excellent conditions ... and our mediocre situation: thus revealing their wealth and our poverty, their pride and our degradation, their strength and our weakness, their triumphs and our defects (quoted in Armstrong 2004: 161).

Qāsim Amīn's book *Taḥrīr al-Mar'a*, mentioned in section 2.2.8.1, is again an example of how an Egyptian writer had internalized and adopted a colonial prejudice (Armstrong 2004: 165), namely, he argued that the veil was the cause of the degraded position of women in society.

Not surprisingly, this condescending and supercilious attitude of the colonialists inspired a backlash in the form of a flurry of essays and articles against the British

occupation, and thus, indirectly abetted and sustained the progress of these new genres.

Other notable topics tackled by many writers were the problem of wine drinking and the hypocrisy about it. In the stories they would treat the harmful effects of alcohol on the individual person, its bad consequences, that friends would forsake him / her, and the fact that s(he) would destroy his / her future and that of his / her family (Būqarī 1979: 23).

Another contentious issue, mentioned before but worthwhile repeating, was the use of language. The writers would argue for the use of only classical Arabic (*fuṣṣḥā*) in their narratives while others would argue for the exclusive use of colloquial Arabic (*‘āmmiyya*). Many tried to solve the issue by using *fuṣṣḥā* in the dialogues, others used colloquial in the dialogues, while a third group tried to use simple *fuṣṣḥā* which was familiar to the populace’s taste (Būqarī 1979: 23). Not surprisingly, the occupying English tried to destroy one of the strongest factors which bound the different Arab and Muslim peoples, namely classical Arabic, by encouraging the use of the colloquial languages in literature.

#### 3.4.12 Egyptian Women of Letters

*Natā’ij al-Aqwāl fī al-Aqwāl wa al-Af’āl* by ‘Ā’isha al-Taimūriyya (1840-1902) was already mentioned in section 3.4.7. She was the “first Arab woman writer to achieve distinction ... she produced poetical diwans in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, ... elegies on relatives, ... ghazal of a sufistic character (and) her prose includes some writing on social problems. Her poetical style was old-fashioned, while her prose shows maqama influence” (Haywood 1971: 84). Besides her, there were very few Egyptian authoresses, like Tāhā Ḥusain observed:

Literature by Egyptian women was meager and scanty indeed and not of a good quality. Doctor Suhail al-Qalamālī ..., for instance, wrote only one book *Ahādith Jaddatī*, some critical studies and narratives, and translated some of Shakespeares works ... Doctor ‘Ā’isha ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, again, attempted some studies on the *Qur’ān*, historical compositions on the life of the prophet’s mother, wives and daughters, wrote some research papers and a book containing sketches of women’s lives, and studies on the problems facing the Egyptian *falāhin*. Although there are some other short story authoresses and poetesses, they are so few and their efforts are not of a quality that will make it endure (Al-Dasūqī 2002: 21).

Haywood (1971: 205-6) mentions an authoress who devoted her pen to the feminine cause and who wrote under the pseudonym of *Bint al-Shāḥī* (The Riverside Girl). Judging from Tāhā Ḥusain’s remarks above and those of Haywood, she must be none other than

Doctor *Ā'isha 'Abd al-Raḥmān*. Her sociological and economic studies can be found in *Qaḥiyya al-Fallāḥ* (The Peasant Problem). She has a compilation of 24 short stories (*ḥuwar min ḥayātihinna* – Pictures from their Lives) illustrating the problems faced by the emancipated Arab woman (Haywood 1971: 206).

### 3.5 The *Masraḥiyya* (Theatrical Play)

Although the play and its development is not part of the work at hand, a brief overview can be made so as to give a full, rounded picture of the development of modern Arabic literature, that is, to show how the different 'new' forms developed side by side and how they were fashioned under the same factors, and also to illustrate how pervasive the influence of Western literature was on the evolution of modern Arabic literature.

The *masraḥiyya*, compared to the *maqāla* and the *qiṣṣa*, was a totally new form of literature in Arabic, for the simple reason that Arabs did not have ancient theatres like, for example, ancient Greece and Rome. It all started with the arrival of Napoleon Bonaparte in Egypt. Naturally, the first plays were in French. They did not influence Arabic literature at the time because the people did not understand French. It was only during the rule of Ismā'īl (towards the second half of the nineteenth century), when literary relations between Europe and Egypt were established, that the Western plays had an effect on Arabic literature. Western plays and operas were entirely translated into colloquial Arabic, and performed in an opera house specifically built for this purpose. The initial attempts at theatre "played a significant part in presenting social problems" to the man in the street in a novel manner (Al-ḥāhir & Isma'il 1979: 2). But because all of these efforts at playwriting were totally 'Egyptianised', it still did not form part of Arabic literature. Even the Syrian-Lebanese *émigré* writers translated and performed classical Italian opera and French plays in the local colloquial tongue. The reason for this was to satisfy the taste of the ordinary people, for their understanding, and for their enjoyment. Some characteristics of the translations were:

1. Its main aim was to entertain.
2. The amount of colloquial used depended on the translator.
3. Names were replaced with Egyptian names.
4. Events were sometimes changed.
5. Arabic poetry was sung in the plays.
6. The styles of *saj`* and *badī`* were used to a marked extent.
7. Most translations were from French.

8. More colloquial was used than in the *qiṣṣa*.

Later some playwrights started to write Arabic plays, drawing their subject matter from *Alf Laila wa Laila* and similar fictional narratives, Arabic and Islamic history, the calls for social reform and national movements, and the love and hate relationships in society. Most of these efforts were weak, and thus still did not enter the domain of Arabic literature.

As was the case with the *qiṣṣa*, two types of plays developed: social and historical. The social *masraʿiyya* portrayed the shortcomings of Egyptian society and how the *fasād* (corruption) and vicious aspects of Western civilization affected the morals and behaviour of Egyptian people. The historical *masraʿiyya* dealt with certain Muslim personalities and how they, as representatives of the brave, Eastern Muslim, struggled valiantly and fearlessly against the shrewd, Western colonizer. The writer would intersperse his / her opinions about society and the state of the nation during the course of the play. The works of Muḥammad Taimūr were pioneering as far as both types of *masraʿiyya* were concerned, except that he also wrote them in the local dialect.

Various *masraʿiyya*, especially social in nature, were produced by different capable playwrights after the end of the First World War, numerous acting groups were founded, and theatre enjoyed a blossoming period until the late 1920's when it fatally stagnated. The reason was the introduction of cinema in Egypt. Plays would be revived and become popular again in the 1940's when Taufiq al-ḥakīm started to write and produce his plays. He developed the play to a level which his predecessors could only dream of, and is "considered the greatest champion of modern Arabic theatre" (Al-Bāwī n.d: 9). He firmly established its principles in prose in the same way which Aḥmad Shauqī established the fundamentals of modern Arabic poetry. He achieved this through his vast, civil culture and his fine, subtle theatrical culture. By marrying these two cultures with his Arabic Egyptian spirit, he became an Egyptian playwright of the uniquely humane type. His plays were truly Arabic in nature in that he did not imitate any Western playwright, but derived his inspiration from his own talents, environment and Arabic Egyptian spirit. The plays were very philosophical in nature and demonstrated how far Egyptians had progressed intellectually. His philosophy was based on the fallibility of the human mind, and the tendency towards spiritualism that runs deeply in the veins and souls of Easterners. Haywood feels that al-ḥakīm's dramatic output equals in quantity that of Shakespeare, Shaw or Galsworthy (1971: 202), and includes, amongst others, *Muḥammad*, *Ahl al-Kahf* (1933 – the most perfect, and hailed by Ṭāhā Ḥusain as 'an event in the history of Arabic

literature'), *Shahrazād* (1938), *Praxa* (1939), *Pygmalion* (1942), *Solomon the Wise* (1943) and *Oedipus Rex* (1949).

The play as a form of Arabic literature attracted many university students, the most famous of whom would be Maḥmūd Taimūr. He first wrote plays in the colloquial like his older brother Muḥammad Taimūr, and then changed to classical Arabic. His plays were, like his *qiṣṣa* concerned with the social aspects of his environment, and he extended this environment to include the countryside and the life of the peasants. He also derived his plays from Arabic history, and always described human nature in his psychological analyses. His final works were characterised by the on-going great battle between the intellect and the instincts of man. Besides Taimūr there were many other playwrights who participated in this new Egyptian literature, and they deserve high praise for their untiring efforts, and the skills and innovation which they showed. Al-Bāwī mentions the pioneering efforts of `Uthmān Jalāl, Faraḥ Anṣūn and Ibrāhīm Ramzī (n.d: 9-10).

In this way Egypt could realise for herself a magnificent literary revival. She removed all the veils and screens which separated her from the great literatures of the world. She attained a glorious literature in the *maqāla*, *qiṣṣa* and *masraʿiyya*, and a great deal of this literature would be translated into all of the major world languages (Dāif 1974: 212-17). "...The Arab world is justly proud of all of these shining and exemplary intellectual giants because they not only represent the fundamentals of Arabic-Islamic thought, but also its pure and noble heritage" (Al-Bāwī n.d: 9). Contemporary writers managed, although not to the fullest extent, to make the formal idiom as natural and true to life as they can. In their hands modern Arabic literature has become of age.

It was seen how the nature of a society can play a role in the development of literature and how the different new forms of literature originated and evolved. The literary essay gave rise to the short story which eventually led to the novel as it is known to the West. `Abd Allāh Nadīm and Adīb Isḥāq, although not popularly acknowledged, played important pioneering roles in this respect. They would nurture, train and inspire future geniuses. Simultaneously, it was shown that, according to Goldziher, Arab Muslims found that "the classical works from the *Qur'ān* to Ibn Khaldūn's *al-Muqaddima* ... even in the light of Western intellectualism ... were not contrary to human progress ..." (1966: 159). The study also showed that 'traditionalism' and 'modernism' do not run counter to, but parallel, to each other in modern Arabic literature. In the succeeding chapter we shall see and come to appreciate how an author, through his style and ideas, succeeded to transcend from the 'traditional' to the 'modern'.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī (1876 – 1924)**

By the dawn of the twentieth century, as was described, the horizons of *maqāla* writing had expanded tremendously and three types could be distinguished: social, political and literary. Likewise, the writing style had progressed, the distance becoming enormous between the modern style of the time and the one that preceded it. The style had become more compliant to express the feelings and sensitivities of the self, and the expression diversified according to the subject. Social subjects needed correct and precise expression, and the avoidance of embellishment, flowery rhetoric and exaggeration. Political topics, on the other hand, had to be characteristically clear and simple and had to tend towards effectiveness and persuasion. As for literature on ethics and morals, it needed to be reviewed and had to embrace words and expressions that originated from a pure taste and subtle feelings, intelligence, and an able imagination (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 16).

As was previously mentioned, the use of *sajʿ* and its components like *muḥassanāt* (embellishments) still remained until the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, and there was a bitter battle between those who were impressed by it and practised it, and those who frowned upon its use. It was at this time that the ensuing progress in the writing of the *maqāla* at the hands of Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī was distinguished and had far-reaching effects in taking prose to a new stage, a stage that in some respects resembled the revival of poetry at the hands of Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī (1838-1904) who severed his connections from all signs of weakness and pallor of style. Al-Manfalūṭī's contribution could also be compared to the role of the 'prince of Egyptian poets' Aḥmad Shauqī (1869-1932) in radiant rhetoric, touching music, clarity, and eloquent speech. In the progress of prose, al-Manfalūṭī became the leader of a flowing and leisurely style in prose writing, and the most distinguished of contemporary writers. After him, the writing styles would develop extensively at the hands of the generations to come (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 16-17).



As stated in the general introduction, the reason for writing about Muḥammad al-Manfalūḥī is to look at the various factors that influenced him and the circumstances that surrounded him, whether specific ones like his family and friends or general ones that relate to the time he lived in. Maybe in this way one can explain his literary method and understand why he chose the *maqāla* and *qitḥa* and not another form of prose, and why his social essays and stories were so popular. It is also said that style is personality, that is, the author(ess)'s style is very closely related to his (her) personality. It is, therefore, essential to look at all aspects of a writer's life, from birth to death, to understand his / her writings, and to understand what made him / her different from other writers.

Before going into the specifics of the man, a brief overview of him and his contribution may be opportune here. More details will be given in its appropriate place. As a story-teller, his works can be divided into the short story (*qitḥa*) and the narrative (*riwayah*). His short stories, again, can be sub-divided into those that he composed himself (*mauḥūṭ*) and those that he translated (*mutarjam*). Some of these stories were published as a collection *al-Naḥārāt* while others saw the light as *al-`Abarāt*. The narratives, again, can be distinguished by translations which he freely adapted and those that he changed the type, e.g. he made narratives out of the plays *al-Shā`ir* and *Fī sabīl al-Tāj*. His leaning was towards Romanticism, which was a result of the political and social circumstances under which he lived during the early nineteenth century. It was the time when the failure of the 'Urabī revolution and the English occupation caused feelings of gloom, pessimism, oppression and pain in the minds, souls and hearts of every Egyptian, especially the youth. This atmosphere is partly why al-Manfalūḥī wrote in this tearful, sad, romantic way, and why he could identify with and write about the youth's pains, hopes, misery and despondency, and why the people, in turn, could empathize with his free translations of the French works of Bernadin de San Pierre, Alfonso Carr and Franco Acopée. His translations would greatly influence the generation after him, personalities like Ḥafīẓ Ibrāhīm who translated Victor Hugo, Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt who translated Ghotte and Lambertine, `Alī Adham who translated Chatuparyan and Felix Faris who translated the works of Alfred de Tousey.

Al-Manfalūḥī's stories were characterised by the relation of incidents and the giving of information without actual detailed analysis of the plot or characters. In addition, there were no climaxes or twists. He was also guilty of pretentiousness and hyporbole, especially when it came to love, national sensibilities, the weak, poor and wretched, and particularly when it concerned women and children. However, his stories were very influential and effective, and this was in no small measure due to one thing: his writing style (Qāsim 2001: 22 – 24). This innovative style will be explored in more detail later.

#### 4.1 His Birth, Lineage and Formative Years

Muḥḥafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūḥī was born on the tenth of *Thu al-ijja* 1293 AH (corresponding to 30 December 1876 AD) in the town called Manfalūḥ, situated on the West bank of the Nile river in Egypt. His father, Luṭfī Muḥammad ḥasan, was a learned man of law and leader of a Sufi group (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 19). Abū al-Anwār quotes Professor Aḥmad ḥāfi when the latter described the family: “His father’s family in Manfalūḥ was well-known for their nobility, strong belief in God, knowledge and moral excellence. His father, Sayyid Muḥammad Luṭfī, was a judge and was one of the most prominent men in Manfalūḥī” (2000: 22). His lineage can be traced to ḥusain, one of the grandchildren of the prophet Muḥammad. That is why one of his nick-names was *Sayyid*, the normal custom to call somebody whose lineage can be directly traced to the prophet Muḥammad (*Sayyid* literally means ‘master’ or ‘chief’). His father was an Arab and his mother a Turk of the respected and learned Churabachi family. His other nick-name, al-Manfalūḥī, came from the name of his town of birth.

Al-Manfalūḥī left Manfalūḥ to first study at *al-Azhar* University, then he learned under *Shaikh* Muḥammad `Abduh, and would later accompany the revolutionary Sa`ad Zaghlūl, both of whom played major roles in his life and about whom more will be written in its appropriate place (chapter 5).

As a child, his first education was in the office of *Shaikh* Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyutī and *Shaikh* Muḥammad Riḥwān, a *faqīh* (a specialist in Islamic law) who taught many students who would become writers and scientists in the town of Suyūḥ. A friend of his father, `Abd Allāh Hāshim, used to visit their house regularly. He was well versed in literature, especially poetry. It was he who endeared Arabic literature to the young boy. Muḥḥafā would therefore love to recite *qaḥīdas* and books of literature aloud. It was also `Abd Allāh who encouraged al-Manfalūḥī to memorise the *Qur’ān*. It is said that he memorised the whole *Qur’ān* with his first attempt and without repeating it twice or thrice as was the tradition with the other students of *Qur’ān*. He was then only eleven years old. At that same age he was sent to the *al-Azhar* school to follow in his father’s and forefathers’ footsteps. He would remain there for ten years, studying the religious sciences and Arabic language (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 19-20). Al-Manfalūḥī said the following in *al-Naḥārāt* about that period in his life:

No one around me asked them (the *al-Azhar* lecturers) for help in literature so much as I did... and I was not even thirteen at the time ... amongst the old type of *al-Azhar shaikhs*... they saw fit to increase my knowledge with the deeds of heroism, mocking and temptation from the devil... they would many times attack

me with what I did not like... I therefore felt afflicted and worthless to them to an extent that no one else would be able to bear... (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 20).

Al-Manfalūḡī did not want to specialize in *dīn* because *his* first love was literature (Ḍaif 1974: 228). According to Buḡrus al-Bustānī, his favourite books were *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd* (The Unique Necklace or The Unique String of Pearls) by Ibn ʿAbdī Rabbihi (d. 940), *al-Aghānī* (The [book of] Songs) by Abū al-Faraj al-Iḡfahānī (d. 967), and *Zahr al-ādāb*. *Al-Aghānī*, of course, uses a collection of Arabian poems set to music “as a basis for an eclectic discussion of the incidents which occasioned their composition, the lives of the poets and their patrons, and the conditions of life of pre-Islamic Arabia” (Bateson 1967 2.332). The anthologies of poems that he preferred were by al-Mutanabbī, al-Buḡtarī, Abū Tamām and al-Sharīf al-Raḡā. His best-loved authors were ʿAbd al-ḡamīd, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (*Kalīla wa Dimna*), Ibn Khaldūn (*al-Maqaddima*) and Ibn al-Athīr if he did not write in the *sajʿ* style. The critics he read were al-Āmidī, al-Bāqillānī, ʿIyāḡ and other writers who were good at words and who extolled the inimitability of the *Qurʿān* and its beautiful methodologies (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 20). The introduction to *al-Naḡarat* and many of his *maqāla* are filled with names of writers whom he had read and admired.

In reading literature freely and in seclusion, al-Manfalūḡī discovered himself because the environment can either kill hidden desires, prevent their subjugation, or suppress them inside a human being. One must either ‘release’ these desires, or achieve what one wants, or resist them. Both the ingenuity of desires and the resistance to them are due to equally to the Creator of man and the demons (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 21). Aḡmad ḡāfiḡ ʿAwaḡ felt that one of the reasons why al-Manfalūḡī could break away from the prevailing conservative teachings of *al-Azhar*, and why he was not influenced by the styles of *sajʿ* and *badīʿ* which were in mode, and why he could herald in a new writing style was precisely because “he pursued his own policy in education, one which was different from those followed by the other *al-Azhar* students. He did not read the prescribed books of *al-Azhar* ... except those which he thought were beneficial ... this led to him having a sound taste and pure mind ... he would spend most of his time reading books on nature, morals, literature and wise sayings until these overpowered him, especially literature ...” (quoted in al-Jābī 2002: I/48).

He then started to attend the study circles of *Imām* Muḡammad ʿAbduḡ. He felt discouraged by the teaching methods in *al-Azhar*, and became despondent with the institution’s lecturers and sciences. Soon he would discover what he wanted with *Imām* Muḡammad ʿAbduḡ. The *Imām* encouraged him and described to him the ideal way to achieve the aims of literature and life. Aḡmad ḡāfiḡ said in an introduction to *al-Naḡarat*

(1916 publication): “He (Muḥammad al-Ḥafīẓ) bonded with him (the *Imām*) like a son bonds with his father, he increased his attendance of his lessons, coming and going for a full ten years. In this manner he completed any short-comings in his religious and literary knowledge ... The teacher (may Allāh have mercy on him) was highly impressed with him, and used to praise his intelligence and quick-wit in a beautiful way, and felt justified that he would be of the ones who will benefit the most from his knowledge and who would spread his principles and teachings the most” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 21).

Al-Manfalūḥī was one of the *Imām*’s top students, and so the *Imām* preferred him and made him one of his closest students, even one of his most trusted friends. When some *al-Azhar* teachers opposed the *Imām*’s religious teaching methods and his interpretation of the *Qur’ān*, al-Manfalūḥī challenged them, defending his teacher with his pen and tongue (Ṭarād 2003: 5). Besides the *Qur’ān*, *Imām* ‘Abduh taught al-Manfalūḥī the two books on rhetoric by ‘Abd al-Qāhir, namely *Dalā’il al-Ijāz* (The Evidence of Inimitability) and *Asrār al-Balāgha* (The Secrets of Rhetoric) (Ḍaif 1974: 227).

Al-Manfalūḥī then became a social reformer and a keen *Muslim* without fanaticism and rigidity. In these two attributes he undoubtedly resembled and followed in the footsteps of his *shaikh*, as his literary works bore witness. Al-Manfalūḥī would benefit from his closeness to the *Imām* by getting acquainted with Sa‘ad Zaghlūl, a close friend of the *Imām*. Through these two, again, he would get to know ‘Alī Yūsuf, owner and editor of the newspaper *al-Mu‘ayyid* (mentioned in various places earlier on). It was this paper in which al-Manfalūḥī would build himself a distinguished place with his social *maqālāt* (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 21).

Abū al-Anwār quotes Professor Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayāt as having remarked: “After al-Manfalūḥī’s natural abilities and the guidance of his father, the three most influential factors in making him a literary writer were the religious leader Muḥammad ‘Abduh, the politician Sa‘ad Pāsha (Zaghlūl) and the journalistic writer ‘Alī Yūsuf. These three men of genius were some of the most powerful and influential personalities of the time” (2000: 21-2). Qāsim mentions a certain al-Sayyid Rāshid Riḥā who, together with ‘Abduh and Zaghlūl, had a tremendous effect on al-Manfalūḥī’s personality and writing (2001: 17). Al-Manfalūḥī used to indulge in the writings of *Imām* ‘Abduh, drinking and gulping from them as he drank and gulped from the translated or composed works of his contemporaries. In this way he prepared himself to become a skilful journalist, not a traditional news correspondent, but an essayist, stylist and article writer (Ḍaif 1974: 228).

While a student at *al-Azhar*, al-Manfalūḥī lived a good, noble life and did not, as some of his critics claimed, experience misery as far as worldly comforts are concerned,

because his father earned the salary of a legal judge and, besides that, inherited a big sum of money from his noble family. In addition, his father and mother owned plots of farmland and estates.

He spent his early years at *al-Azhar* composing poetry that attracted much attention. He wrote a famous *qaṣīda Qudūm* ('Brave'), in which he satirized the king *al-Khidawī* `Abbās ḥilmī the Second, and which resulted in him being thrown into jail (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 22). That was in the year 1897. He spent six months in prison (Al-Jābī 2003: I/6). This period in his life was unhappy and the bitter experience of life in jail, besides his other tribulations, filled his heart with suffering, despair and pain (Daif 1974: 228).

#### 4.2 His Working Career

Al-Manfalūḥī worked as a government diplomat, but lost this job as a result of the satire of *al-Khidawī* `Abbās Ḥilmī the Second in his poem *Qudūm. Imām Muḥammad* `Abduh pleaded with the king, on behalf al-Manfalūḥī, to pardon him and to return to him his personal rights. When Sa`ad Zaghlūl became the Minister of Education in 1906, he took an interest in al-Manfalūḥī, especially after the latter's literary works became well-known. Sa`ad was very impressed with Muḥammad's work for he himself was a man of Arabic *Belles Lettres*. In 1909 he offered al-Manfalūḥī a post which suited his talents and natural disposition, namely the post of 'Arabic Editor', in the government. His duties were to improve the writing style of the resolutions and correspondence in the government offices of the Education ministry, especially that of major issues wherein the long-winded memoranda and accompanying, lengthy resolutions had been passed (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 24).

Al-Manfalūḥī stayed in this position until Roosevelt, the president of America at the time, arrived in Egypt. Prior to his arrival, Roosevelt gave a speech in Khartoum in which he encouraged the Sudanese nation to accept and adhere to the rule of the colonizers. The Egyptians rejected this idea and warned him in the paper *al-Mu'ayyid* not to repeat his speech in Cairo, but when he set his feet on Egyptian soil, he declared that the Egyptians were unable to rule themselves. This, of course, caused a furore, and the Egyptian nation fiercely opposed the President's statements. At this point al-Manfalūḥī's inborn nationalistic trait came to the fore. He picked up his pen and wrote a refutation to Roosevelt, calling him to a discussion in an article *Muḥākama Roosevelt amām Maḥkama al-'Adl* ('The Prosecution of Roosevelt in the Court of Justice'). This article caused a reaction in an Englishman called Dunlop, an advisor in the Ministry of Education at the time. He wanted to take revenge on al-Manfalūḥī by having him fired. Sa`ad Pāsha, however, challenged Dunlop, saying: "The

government is in need of a person like mister Muḥammad , and he is not in need of it (the government). Jobs are (like) graves for writers and it is better for the government that a person like him be inside it” (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 24-25). Whichever post he held, al-Manfalūḥī was a perfect example of trust, truthfulness, boldness and sincerity in his work (Ḥarād 2003: 5).

When Sa`ad Pāsha became a minister in the Ministry of Justice which was run by Muḥammad Sa`id Pāsha in 1910, al-Manfalūḥī was transferred to this Ministry. He was appointed in a similar post as the one he had held before. There he stayed until Sa`ad was appointed secretary-general of the Legislative Assembly (1913) and al-Manfalūḥī became its secretary. While there he wrote his wonderful *maqāla* on ‘Egyptian Issues’ (1921), defending Sa`ad Pāsha in it. When Sa`ad started his revolt, al-Manfalūḥī was sacked, and started to publish his *al-Naḥārāt* which comprised all of these essays (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 25).

It was related that al-Manfalūḥī was having dinner with some guests when the notification letter of his sacking arrived. He just took one look at the letter, put it under his hand, and continued enjoying his meal. Someone asked, “What is that?” He said, “A letter of dismissal.” They were amazed, saying, “How can you accept it with such calmness and disdain?” He replied, “Because that is not my sustenance. The important thing is the pen ....” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 25) However, the post was re-offered to al-Manfalūḥī after six months, and this time he worked in the ‘Royal Secretariat’. The common belief was that his fame as a writer and the influence he wielded over the populace with his pen, were the two reasons why the authorities re-offered him a job, and in that post specifically (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 25).

His daughter, Zainab Muḥammad , related that she heard from her mother that Nash`at Pāsha, the director of the Royal *Dīwān*, came to al-Manfalūḥī and requested that he burn the *maqālāt Fī al-Qaḥṭiyya al- Miḥriyya* (About the Egyptian Issue). Nash`at did not wait until al-Manfalūḥī obliged, but took the *maqālāt* and burned them himself because he knew that al-Manfalūḥī would never do it. Soon afterward, the police arrived at their residence, and disrupted and destroyed many things during their search of the house. The house would remain surrounded for several days. Zainab recalled that she could still picture that siege. Although she was still a toddler and therefore unconcerned about happenings around her, she could still remember telling her mother, “*al-Ingilīz barra*” (“The English are outside”).

Ms Zainab remembered that her father never went to the Royal *Dīwān* to take up his new post. Her mother told her that her father refused to take the job because his friend Sa`ad Pāsha was engaged in a struggle with the authorities and, if he would work for the king, he would have to keep quiet and be unable to support his comrade (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 26).

The above is but one illustration of al-Manfalūqī's exemplary "bravery, sincerity, truthfulness, trust and great moral values" (Jabbūr 1983: v).

Al-Manfalūqī would defend Sa`ad Pāsha with all his might and capabilities. As fate would have it, he returned to his former post in the Legislative Assembly that was closed down, but he still earned a monthly salary of twenty-eight pounds while remaining at home. All activities of the Assembly had come to a standstill, and the colonizers were naturally happy about it, and only too glad to disburse the staff.

After Sa`ad's revolt against the English (1919), he became the Prime Minister and established a parliament. In 1923, a constitution was drawn up. Al-Manfalūqī was chosen as the head of the Secretariat of the Council of Senators, earning fifty pounds a month. He would remain in this post until his death at the age of forty-eight. He died the same day on which Sa`ad was brutally assaulted. The coincidence appeared as if he had even sacrificed his life for Sa`ad out of loyalty to him. That was on 21 July 1924 (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 26-27). Zaghlūl managed to escape with his life, but was critically injured. The incident caused a lot of commotion in the country. The people's attention was taken up by this event and thus did not give al-Manfalūqī's demise the attention it deserved (Qarād 2003: 5).

#### 4.3 His Personal Life and Family

As was mentioned above, al-Manfalūqī was born of an Arab father and Turkish mother in a house of knowledge and law, and his lineage went back to *Imām* Ḥusain, the son of `Alī ibn Abī Ḥālib. Things did not go all that smoothly in that marriage and his parents got divorced. She married another man from Manfalūqī. This affected the boy tremendously for he had a sensitive, delicate personality, and would cry even for imaginary things. It made him even more sensitive to the miseries and sufferings of life at an early age, and he developed a keen empathy with the unfortunate and wretched. He was helped in this by his natural inclination towards those in need. He generally acquired sensitive feelings and a melancholy temperament, and consequently secluded himself with the reading of books as a child and at *al-Azhar* as a student, trying to reconcile his expectations of life and reality that seemed to clash all the time. Al-Manfalūqī preferred to live in his own world, away from deception, cheating, cunningness and hypocrisy that were on the increase due to the oppressive life at the time. He spoke about the meaning of this in his *qaṣīda Paul et Virginie* (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 28).

Al-Manfalūqī had five children by his first wife, twin boys who did not live very long, and three daughters Zakiyya, Anīsa and Najya. The girls all married during his lifetime

and Anisa died before him. He then married a woman from Cairo, Ratība Ḥusnī, who bore his children Fāṣil, Ḥasan, Ḥasanāt, Zainab, Qadariyya, Aḥmad and Maḥāsīn (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 29-30). He lost two children in one week and it affected him greatly. His wife would pass away soon afterwards (Al-Jābī 2003: I/51). He wrote a *rithā'* (elegy) for Fāṣil, called *al-Dafn al-aghīr* (The Young Corpse). He speaks of the burial of his young child who died in infancy, striking an intensely personal note.

Al-Manfalūṭī loved his children very much. He expressed his deep sorrow in *qaṣīdas* for those whom he had lost. He was greatly concerned about the future of his remaining offspring. The father hired a private tutor, *Shaikh* al-Dardīr, for his daughters in Manfalūṭī and paid him a monthly salary equal to that of a government employee (two pounds). In Cairo, he entered Najya in a private school, the American College, and Ḥasan and Ḥasanāt were entered into French schools. Ḥasan achieved a degree in English literature; Zainab obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy and afterwards a degree in law. Aḥmad qualified with a diploma in Physical Education. The other daughters married good husbands and either left university before qualifying or did not attend university because they preferred being housewives to working.

Al-Manfalūṭī treated his wives and daughters very well, and why not, when he defended the woman in even her worst of states (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 30). One of his wives was stricken by a disease that weakened her eyesight. He would give her the same household duties as a normally sighted person so that she must know that he did not despise her for her disability. He wrote about how to treat a wife and how to treat and deal with the fair sex in the essay *al-Wafā* (Faithfulness) (Al-Jābī 2002: I/7).

#### 4.4 His Appearance, Manners and Habits

A writer's personal characteristics are very important in research of a literary nature. Therefore it is essential to consider and study some information about, and events in, a writer's life which appear plain and insignificant, but actually are powerful indications about him / her and his / her temperament. Likewise, the writer's works are normally a reflection of his / her inner self, especially in the case of al-Manfalūṭī who wrote from his heart and who was a product of his physical environment and the people around him.

Abū al-Anwār again quotes Professor Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt on the latter's relationship with al-Manfalūṭī: "Al-Manfalūṭī was of medium height, stout, had a thick moustache, was goodly of manner, did not have the appearance of an artist or thinker on his face, and when he speaks to you in his soft manner he did not reveal eloquence in speech



...He had an uneasy temperament, a lively character and a detached presence. I studied him according to what I know about myself, and will not exceed the truth in describing and appraising him” (2000: 31).

He continued: “Al-Manfalūḡī was a piece of music, internally and externally, gentle in manner, appropriate in taste, contemplative, harmonious in style, elegant in dress, revealed no sign of genius in his words or deeds .... He understood correctly but slowly, was sound in thought when tackling issues, quietly sensitive in feeling, comfortable with memorization... Because of these character traits he was wary with company, avoided arguments, and despised giving lectures. This could be traced to the modesty and decency of the traditional education in his family, the education at *al-Azhar* that did not encourage speaking and discussion, and the very sensitive feelings of dignity and self-honour; but if you sat with him face to face, he was clear and explicit in his conversation, competitive in speech, bold in clear criticism, and mature in his opinions. Then you did not doubt that this was the al-Manfalūḡī whom you had read ... In addition he was delicate, pure and sound of heart, followed the correct religious beliefs, generous, diverse in thought, favoured and loved by his family and countrymen” (2000: 32).

Abū al-Anwār also relates how another friend of al-Manfalūḡī, Professor ḡāhir ḡanāḡī, described him: “Al-Manfalūḡī was very humble, delicate in courtesy, calm of nature, not as some claim ... pessimistic and fanatical of nature. When you talk to him, you feel calm and satisfied ... and (then) you get a different picture of the al-Manfalūḡī who is sad and seclusive ....” (2000: 32-33).

The newspaper *al- ḡā`iqa* (The Thunderbolt) which presented a series of articles on literature by prominent writers during 1905, said about him: “ You see him pure in deeds and words, not begging with literature for his needs, not spoiling his company or friendship, not being artificial in word or deed. He still spoke like his own town folk, pronouncing (the letters) *qāf* as *jīm* and *jīm* as *shīn* and nasalizing some letters. (He was) not satisfied with his shameful handwriting ... If it is true that intelligence eats age like fire eats dry firewood, how is it possible for this intelligent (man) to live and where does he get the life from ?” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 33).

Aḡmad ḡāfiḡ `Awaḡ said that al-Manfalūḡī’s political mentor and friend, Sa`ad Zaghlūl, often told al-Manfalūḡī, “I see you in your writings a person whom I wish I can see in the pens of many writers” (quoted in al-Jābī 2002: I/52 and Jabbūr 1983: xviii)

This was how his colleagues and contemporaries described him. If we look at his literary compositions in an effort to obtain a better understanding of him, we find that as far as his personality traits are concerned, two distinct traits. The first one is his delicacy of

feelings and perceptiveness. He profoundly felt the difficult, cruel effects life had on all the people around him and could therefore gather and describe the painful pictures of suffering which had befallen his society, and was able to treat it in various insightful ways.

Consequently, he became known for his empathy with the wretched, the deprived, the sad and depressed, and those who suffered pain. He was almost totally inclined towards humanity. In his *maqālāt*, for example *al-Jāmi`a al-Insāniyya* (The University of Mankind), he reiterated his general inclination towards man as a human being when he despaired about the hardships of the people during the war, calling for peace and respect for the common bond between all peoples. This delicate sensitivity and sensibility that he had was his biggest supporting pillar in his literary works. If it is true that a writer always needs to be strong of feeling, subtle in perceptions and sensitive in affections, because with these personal attributes s(he) will be able to spread the noble feelings of morality in his / her society and thereby revive and elevate the nation, then al-Manfalūqī had this in abundance. He was also very generous with his friends, dividing whatever he had amongst them.

His second distinguishing feature was his exemplary moral leanings that were reflected in his unceasing desire to enlighten his society with truth, goodness and virtue. All the emotional topics and challenging issues that he tackled in his *maqālāt* and *qīṭa*, make the reader realize that the most progressive morals and ethics in man, namely the love of truth, goodness and beauty, are gathered in his personality (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 33-34).

It is believed that it was al-Manfalūqī's good character and personal, exemplary conduct that caused King *al-Khidawī* to pardon him for the satire of the king (mentioned in 4.1). Aḥmad al-ʿAṭfī wrote that the King became aware of al-Manfalūqī's good intentions, his sound heart, and empathy for the poor and downtrodden (Al-Jābī 2002: I/51).

His seclusion was in fact a personal choice, for he did not escape from society and did not avoid people. It is the nature of man to socialise and al-Manfalūqī was no exception. He had many friends whom he associated with and by whom he was visited. He said about himself in the 'Introduction' to *al-Naṭarāt*, "The nature of my situation was such that I could not completely avoid people and I could not choose from the best of them and the manliest amongst them whom I wanted for my companionship, so I faced them with shortcomings and all" (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 34).

The many visitors he received were all sincere and bosom friends and from the choicest strata of society, but these meetings and socializations did not fill the emptiness in his self. Abū al-Anwār says that this can be seen when he addressed the moon in *al-Naṭarāt*:

O shining moon, between us is a common spirit and bond, you are alone in your sky and I am alone in my earth, both of us make our rounds quietly, calmly, shattered and sad, the one not caring about the other...

both of us expose each other on a dark night and are intimate... whispering: someone sees me and thinks I'm happy, because the smile on my mouth and the light in my face deceive him, but if my soul is laid bare to him and he sees what anxiety and sadness are on it, then he'll mournfully cry for me (2000: 34-35).

The author of *Muḥaḍḍaf Luḥf al-Manfalūḥī: Imām al-Bayān al-`Arabī* had a hunch which explained why al-Manfalūḥī was a sad person: the man was in love once upon a time and then suffered the pains of having to depart from his love. He quoted from his poetry and prose to substantiate his hunch. In a poem al-Manfalūḥī related the story of an unrequited love. In a piece of prose in *al-Naḥārāt* he addressed the moon, saying,

O shining moon, I once had a lover who filled my soul with light, and my heart with delight and happiness. Many times did I call on him and he called on me between your ears and eyes. Time has torn us apart. Will you then inform me of his whereabouts? For maybe he is looking at you like I am, and calling on you as I do, and pleading to you like I am (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 36).

It is also related that he was not satisfied with his first wife. He only married her to satisfy the wishes of his father and due to the customs of the time. Al-Manfalūḥī avoided all topics about romantic love. These hunches and information, of course, may not be fully true, but one looks at these possibilities in order to achieve an understanding of the nature of a writer and his / her works.

We can also try to interpret and explain his stories about lovers to whom he always gives an unlucky ending, his grief for them, his description of the struggle against their suffering, his success in exciting the readers' feelings concerning the victims, his empathy with the female sex and his respect for and defence of her, and his inclination towards romanticism when writing about her. Maybe it was an expression of his repressed feelings struggling in the depths of insensitivity. This is a very plausible explanation as far as the evidence suggests (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 36-37). He followed the 'philosophy of satisfaction' because when his cherished hopes were not realised, he would say that the will of God is always behind all hopes of man. This philosophy of life could maybe also be ascribed to the fact that he had high expectations that were never fulfilled. When despair in this regard took hold of him, he would resign himself to being satisfied with what God had ordained for him. Furthermore, he believed that the cause of people's misery was their little appreciation of their happiness for that day. Abū al-Anwār quotes him: "The reason for man's misery is that he hardly appreciates his day's happiness, and kills time concerning the happiness of tomorrow. If it (happiness) comes to him, he thinks that yesterday was better than today. So he remains miserable in his present and in his past" (2000: 37).

Al-Manfalūḡī made all his visitors feel very welcome, “but hated exaggeration in friendliness and overdoing welcome, loved educated criticism even when it was bitter and as long as the speaker was sincere in his speech and method (of criticism)” (2000: 37). This was one of the reasons why he preferred privacy and tended not to socialize. It was as if he desired of people what they did not desire from one another. The man intensely hated lying and nothing was dearer to him than sincerity in both words and deeds. He said in one of his essays in *al-Naḡarāt*: “I have not hated anything in my life as much as lying and hypocrisy (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 37-38).

His house was always open to, and filled with, visitors, ranging from men from the secretariat of the Royal Court to Shaukat Pāsha, the prince of poets Aḡmad Shauqī, and ḡāfiḡ Ibrāhīm. The latter two were, of course, regarded as “the twin geniuses who were for long considered the spokesmen of Egypt, and to a lesser extent of the whole Arab world” (Haywood 1971: 86). This showed that he was an honoured and respected person and that he knew how to treat people of all levels.

He was very self-confident and could not easily be persuaded otherwise once he had held a certain opinion. He would, however, tolerate criticism and did not look down on his critics.

Al-Manfalūḡī had strong religious beliefs, with a profound understanding of *Islām*, free from the superstition and blemishes that were rife during that period. Concerning his firm beliefs, Abū al-Anwār quotes him as saying, “Had I only known that worldly gains and aims could only be achieved by forsaking religious rites or by mocking its compulsory duties, I would have left them and avoided them (the worldly things and aims) and exhausted my hands of them... Had I only known that nationalism – which is the best thing man can have in his heart – is an obstacle in the way to my life after death or spreads a veil between me and my Lord, I would have cast it off as I cast off my garment” (2000: 38-39).

He was very cultured in speech and would, for example, criticise those who had done wrong without using indecent language and without being banal, and when critics attacked him in a derogatory manner he would not answer them in the same way. When his critics accused him of not showing delight when people praise him, al-Manfalūḡī did not get upset, but replied: “Many shower praises on me and I do not rebuke them, but there are many others who criticize me and I (also) do nothing. So leave the lies to fight one another, for maybe the sparks that will fly from that battle will lighten for the people a place where the jewels of truth can be found and they will gather them” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 39).

Abū al-Anwār refers to what Professor ḡāhir ḡanāḡī said about al-Manfalūḡī: “When you sit in his company you get a feeling of tranquillity and satisfaction ... then you

get the impression that (al-Manfalūḡī's) sad heart and excitability about the struggle against man's suffering is only another picture which al-Manfalūḡī reverts to when he is alone" (2000: 39). For the truth is that his private life was actually more liberal than what his writings suggested. According to his son, Ḥasan, he loved laughing and gaiety in his company. This, of course, juxtaposes exactly with his sad and sombre mood in especially his stories. These seemingly contradictory features actually complemented one another because in his writings he had to exercise self-control and concentration due to the seriousness of his topics. After this intensive pressure on the mind and spirit, he would thus want to break away and relax in a jovial atmosphere (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 39-40).

In his private life al-Manfalūḡī loved anything to do with the arts. He adored music and used to sing and take a great interest in it. While in Manfalūḡ he sent for various musical compositions from Cairo. He gathered groups of musicians, singers and actors in his house. He was one of the first to watch the *masraḡiyya al-`Ashara al-Ṭayyiba* (The Good Ten) when it was first produced. The following day his friends would celebrate the success of the play at his house.

His house, according to friends and visitors, was elegant and fashionable, and the guest room was of the highest quality and according to the tradition at that time (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 40).

The above aspects of al-Manfalūḡī's biography, personality and character would, together with his culture and social relationship (which will be outlined in the next chapter) play a profound role in his literary style, views and the literature *genre* he would specialize in. In sum, if there was anything to be taken from al-Manfalūḡī's manners and behaviour, then it would be what Aḡmad ḡāfiḡ `Awaḡ had said: "... the bashfulness and coyness of people and his weakness to blame them for being responsible for their shortcomings and for covering up their shame" (quoted in al-Jābī 2002: I/53).

## **Chapter 5**

### **Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī's Social Relationships**

Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī, as previously stated, met *Imām* Muḥammad `Abduh while studying at *al-Azhar* University. Through the *Imām*, he forged friendships of significant consequences with Sa`ad Zaghlūl and then *Shaikh* `Alī Yūsuf. By way of these three very influential men al-Manfalūṭī's personality would find its way in life, sometimes to his benefit and sometimes to his detriment, but the former outweighing the latter by far (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 41).

He deeply acknowledged his indebtedness to those two gentlemen: Muḥammad `Abduh and Sa`ad Pāsha. When he published his *al-Naḥārāt* in 1910, he showed his gratitude to them by dedicating the book to them and his father. He wrote:

If the virtuous is impressed by any virtue in this book, or if the intelligent is satisfied with any opinion in it, or if a writer praises the style, then no person but those three men must take credit: my life guardian and father, Muḥammad Luḥfī, the guardian of my mind and teacher, *Shaikh* Muḥammad `Abduh, and the guardian of my affairs, Mr Sa`ad Pāsha Zaghlūl... (Al-Manfalūṭī 2002: I/23).

Al-Manfalūṭī was thus indissolubly linked to these three strong personalities. Together with the social and political conditions of the time and his upbringing, his association with them moulded his habits, thought, speech and – which is important for our topic – all aspects of his writings.

#### 5.1 Al-Manfalūṭī and *Imām* Muḥammad `Abduh

It is clear from his dedication to *Imām* Muḥammad `Abduh how grateful al-Manfalūṭī was for his love for him and his influence on him. This man played such a big

role in the literary and religious life of al-Manfalūḡī, and was generally such an influential figure, that a quick glimpse at his background may help in understanding why. It will also illustrate some aspects of the history of the development of literature and writing style as previously described in chapters one to three, and more specifically how he influenced al-Manfalūḡī's style and choice of topics.

The Imām was born in 1849, in other words about twenty seven years before al-Manfalūḡī. His father fled with his family from the town *Maḡalla al-Naḡr* to *ḡiḡa Shabsīr*, where the *Imām* was born, due to political oppression (Ḍaif 1974: 218). He memorized the *Qur'ān* and attended *al-Azhar* University, but was very disillusioned with its teachers and their teaching methods. He deeply felt like he had a mission in life: to guide the people to the straight path in religion. Amongst others, he met and studied under Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, who would later also indirectly influence al-Manfalūḡī. It can be remembered that al-Afghānī was a religious scholar, philosopher and revolutionary of the highest degree. His lectures were aimed at the revival of true *Islām* and urging the Muslims to resist occupation and to struggle against the European colonizers. He influenced the *Imām* to write with zeal on the reformation of society, politically, religiously and socially, in the newspapers. In turn, the *Imām* would in future influence al-Manfalūḡī (and also Sa`ad Zaghlūl) in the same way. The common thread that ran through them was their conviction that "Islam was relevant to their own, and to every, generation; and that the Islamic nations should be free and command the respect of the West", and that "Islam was dynamic: its essentials were immutable eternal truth, but unessential externals could evolve to suit the changing environment" – the ethical code, for example, "could bring about internal reform which, in turn, should lead to public virtue" (Haywood 1971: 119 & 123). They all participated in the *Urābī* revolt, mentioned in various places previously, and were banished for a time. After the *Imām*'s ban was lifted, he rose to many high positions in society, for example, *mufī* (a Muslim scholar who gives religious opinions and edicts) of Egypt, senior advisor to the courts of justice, and *mudīr* (rector) of *al-Azhar*. He would answer those Westerners who criticized *Islām* and its teachings, and corrected the wrong opinions his people had of their *dīn* with eloquent articles in the newspapers. His "Koranic commentary and his *Risala al-Tauhid* (are) still considered classics on the Islamic conception of God" (Haywood 1971: 123). This commentary, no doubt, not only had an influence in Egypt, but in the whole Islamic world, being translated into French and Urdu, and being used by the Alghar University in India and in Pakistani institutes as a textbook ('Akāwī 2001: 150).

He initiated a new style of writing which al-Manfalūḡī would develop further in time to come. It was the *Imām* who took journalism out of the circle of the ancient style of *saj`* and

*badī`* to a sound and free style, a style which the populace could understand and relate to. He thus helped in the development of Arabic prose as far as form and topics were concerned. His style and topics suited, and were applicable to, the time and the environment in which he lived. Al-Manfalūqī would take over his ideas on charity and public spirit and another pupil, none other than Qāsim Amīn, would present women's emancipation as a burning issue for Muslim revival. The foremost two traits that the *Imam* implanted into al-Manfalūqī and his other students were 'wisdom' and 'courage' (Akāwī 2001: 18).

Muḥammad `Abduh is recognized as the greatest religious reformer Egypt has known in modern times. He was insightful in the teachings and lofty aims of *Islām*, and boldly called for the emancipation from imitative thought and to the understanding of the religion in the way the former Muslims, like the companions of the prophet Muḥammad and those who immediately came after them, did. He invited to the seeking of modern knowledge, for the *dīn* does not contradict established and firm knowledge and facts. His call to study and research the secrets of the universe and its laws was revolutionary from a *dīn* point of view and as far as its teachers, who remained chained and shackled to the ancient past, are concerned. "With his powerful personality and writings, he inspired men in religion, politics, sociology and philosophy ..." (Akāwī 2001: 12). He is, without exaggeration, regarded as the great reformer, especially in religion, who could reconcile himself, his people and their past with modern intellectual development (Daif 1974: 218-27).

Al-Manfalūqī sat at the feet of his teacher for a period of ten years, and was greatly impressed with him, for his knowledge, his morals and his concern for social and religious reform. In describing his lectures at al-Zahra he wrote: "The late *Sheikh* Muḥammad `Abduh used to read in the mosque of *al-Zahra* a lesson called *al-Taḥṣīl* (an exegesis of the *Qur'ān*) which really was a lesson about everything concerning man's present life and his life after death. In that lesson the man was an expositor of the *Qur'ān*, a narrator of *ḥadīth* (words, deeds and approvals of the prophet Muḥammad), a teacher and a preacher, in fact he was everything that a man could be" (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 41-42).

Elsewhere in *al-Mukhtārāt* he described him, saying: "Muḥammad `Abduh – may God have mercy on him – was the most powerful writer and the most knowledgeable writer of our time, in fact I do not know any jurist since the time of the flourishing period of *Islām* who is more able in literature than him ..." (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 42).

In his essay *al-Rishwa* (Bribery) he praises the *Imām's* behaviour, moral excellence, and ability to rise above disgraceful behaviour. The *Imām* loved, respected and admired his student too. In this regard, Abū al-Anwār quotes Professor Aḥmad ḥafīf: "The *Imām* – may God have mercy on him – was very impressed with him (al-Manfalūqī) and praised his



intelligence and beautiful quick-wittedness and felt justified that he would be of those who benefit the most from his knowledge and of those who would most propagate his principles and teachings” (2000: 42). This prophesy of the *Imām* would, as we have pointed out above and will discuss further, be realised in the ensuing years. It is said that al-Manfalūḡī was very sad when his mentor passed away. Immediately after his funeral he left Cairo for his hometown, Manfalūḡ, where he stayed for two years, “without obtaining an ‘international’ certificate and without considering attaining one in the future” (Qāsim 2001: 17). Qāsim believes that his *Shaikh* contributed to a large extent to al-Manfalūḡī’s “sound and clear mind, his language usage, strong Islamic and Arabic culture, ... and inspired him to address social issues in literature, language and religion, ... his sound and firm Islamic belief, and his purity in sayings and deeds” (2001: 17).

## 5.2 Al-Manfalūḡī and Sa`ad Pāsha Zaghlūl

Al-Manfalūḡī met Sa`ad Pāsha through the *Imām*, and there were two main reasons why their friendship would strengthen and be consolidated:

1. Sa`ad Pāsha was, firstly, a good friend and had a warm relationship with the *Imām*. His political beliefs corresponded with al-Manfalūḡī’s, they were both conservative in their approach to social reformation, and used to clash with the radical national movement of Muḡāfā Kāmil. They preferred, like many other *shaikhs* and educated people, the more moderate political approach of ‘The Party of the Nation’.
2. Al-Manfalūḡī, in his third essay since the publication of *al-Mu`ayyid*, defended Sa`ad Pāsha against the National Party. He wrote an essay under the title *al-Liwā wa al-`Uḡamā* (The Flag Bearer and the Powerful) in his weekly column, reiterating that those who criticize and insult Zaghlūl exposed themselves. They were actually helping and supporting the enemy, namely the colonizing English, and were enemies of the great Egyptian personalities, belittling them instead of the odious and loathsome colonisers.

From that moment onwards, the friendship between the two would strengthen. Sa`ad was impressed with al-Manfalūḡī and would defend him on many occasions, as was mentioned under ‘His Working Career’ (4.2). As pointed out, too, al-Manfalūḡī illustrated

his gratefulness to Sa`ad when he called him his *Walī amrī* (Guardian of my affairs) in his dedication to *al-Naḥḥārāt* in 1910. Sa`ad was actually behind all of al-Manfalūḥī's sustenance (by providing him with jobs with a good income, amongst others) and, to a large extent, also behind all the criticism and enmity al-Manfalūḥī had suffered (due to his open support of Zaghlūl's political leanings).

The most important illustration of al-Manfalūḥī's love for Zaghlūl were the essays he wrote on Egyptian issues (*al-Qaḥḥiyya al-Miḥriyya*). The reader of these articles feel as if al-Manfalūḥī wrote them with his blood for the sake of his leader and guardian. He called Zaghlūl in it *Yā maulāyā* (O my guardian). Previously, another deed of al-Manfalūḥī strengthened the bond between the two. He dedicated his story *Fī Sabīl al-Tāj* (For the Sake of the Crown) – published in June 1920 – to Zaghlūl, when he wrote:

*Ilā al-baḥḥ al-Miḥrī al-`aḥīm Sa`ad Zaghlūl Pāsha...* [To the great Egyptian hero, Sa`ad Zaghlūl Pāsha ...] (Al-Manfalūḥī 2001: 33).

It is important to note that al-Manfalūḥī's love for Zaghlūl was an expression of his nationalism and not the worshipping of a person. Although there were personal issues which bound the two, if one follows al-Manfalūḥī's writings one notices that Zaghlūl represented for him the true symbol of real nationalism and *Jihād* (struggle) for truth. In various places in his *maqālāt al-Qaḥḥiyya al-Miḥriyya* he pointed out that he did not love Zaghlūl himself but loved him for his upright and sincere principles (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 44).

As fate would have it, al-Manfalūḥī's death occurred the same day on which Zaghlūl was attacked and assaulted. As such, the people did not feel, and did not react to, his death so much. Aḥmad Shauqī referred to this coincidence when he wrote in a *rithā`* (elegy) for al-Manfalūḥī that it was as if he sacrificed his actual life for Zaghlūl, that he had nothing more to give but his life. Ḥafīf Ibrāhīm pointed out in one of his poems that Sa`ad grieved at the passing away of a dear and sincere friend. Various other writers and poets elegized al-Manfalūḥī's death "and the Arabic Scientific Society in Damascus held a commemoration party in his honour. The speeches and poetry said there, and some of al-Manfalūḥī's sayings were collected in a booklet that was published by Aḥmad `Abīd in 1924" (Qāsim 2001: 18). Concerning his demise, Qāsim reiterated, "Al-Manfalūḥī died in 1924 without seeing his country free and sovereign, and without its aspired hopes being realised. But his mental vision when he said in an essay (in *al-Naḥḥārāt*) addressed to Sa`ad "If its hopes are not realised today, then tomorrow" became true (quoted in Qāsim 2001: 9).

### 5.3 Al-Manfalūḥī and *Shaikh `Alī Yūsuf*

*Shaikh* `Alī Yūsuf, who was the most prominent journalist and the symbol of all Egyptian press in his time, opened the newspaper *al-Mu'ayyid* (The Corroborator) for al-Manfalūqī. In doing so, he gave him the opportunity to practice his literary talent and to present a new style of writing to the public. During those difficult times, that was one of the greatest favours al-Manfalūqī could receive. There were two reasons why he was pushed to write for that newspaper specifically and why he would choose to work for the *Shaikh*:

1. His teacher, *Imām* `Abduh, was intimately connected to *al-Mu'ayyid*. *Shaikh* `Alī Yūsuf, owner of the paper, was a very close friend of the *Imām*. He saw the *Imām* as the only person whom he could depend on to reform *al-Azhar*, except that the enmity between the king, *al-Khidawī* `Abbās, and the *Imām* was at its severest. *Shaikh* `Alī, however, took the middle road between the two, remaining loyal to the *Imām* and not antagonizing the king. He used to inform Sa`ad Zaghlūl and the *Imām*, as members of the 'Party of the Nation', about all the king's secrets and what the king despised of the *Imām*'s deeds and opinions. The *Shaikh*, being a journalist, also knew about al-Manfalūqī's relationship with the *Imām*, and it was said that the *Shaikh* was one of the people who pleaded with *al-Khidawī* to release al-Manfalūqī from prison.

In addition, Sa`ad Zaghlūl was closely related to the paper and its owner. Zaghlūl was a supporter of the *Imām* and, consequently, the four men would become intimate friends. Sa`ad actually reserved this newspaper for the *Shaikh* and the latter would be greatly thankful to the former and would publish his gratitude in the pages of *al-Mu'ayyid* (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 46-47).

2. The owner and editor of the newspaper *al-Ṣā'iqā*, Aḥmad Fu'ād, used to fiercely attack *al-Mu'ayyid* and *Shaikh* `Alī Yūsuf. So when al-Manfalūqī started to write in *al-Mu'ayyid* (1907 onwards), the *Shaikh* lost no opportunity to answer Fu'ād through the talented pen and skill of al-Manfalūqī. The way he defended the *Shaikh* and his newspaper endeared him to al-Manfalūqī who would become its most prominent columnist.

Al-Manfalūqī's readership increased quickly and he would soon write the editorial column in the paper. The paper introduced him as "*Li aḥḥad al-kātib al-majā'id al-sayyid Muḥafā Luḥfī al-Manfalūqī*" ("By his Eminence, the Honourable Writer, Mister

Muḥḥafā Luḥḥfī al-Manfalūḥī”). He himself introduced his series of articles *Li `ālim kabīr wa kātib qadīr* (By the Great Scholar and Respected Writer). Al-Manfalūḥī’s *maqālāt* caused the circulation of *al-Mu’ayyid* to increase manifold. Lovers of literature would await his essays eagerly every week. Professor al-`Aqqād said that the most powerful writers at that time were *Shaikh `Alī Yūsuf* and *Shaikh Muḥḥafā Luḥḥfī al-Manfalūḥī*.

It was thus no surprise that the relationship between the two men became very strong and it was no surprise, too, that al-Manfalūḥī defended *al-Mu’ayyid* and its *Shaikh* in many political battles and on historical occasions. Al-Manfalūḥī expressed the extent of his gratitude and respect towards the *Shaikh* when he dedicated his book *al-Mukhtārāt* (Selections), issued on 15 March 1912, to him, saying:

“*Ilā su`adā’ al-ustāth al-sayyid `Alī Yūsuf ...*” (“To the distinguished Mister `Alī Yūsuf ...”) (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 48-9).

In another *maqāla*, actually a *rithā’* for *Shaikh `Alī Yūsuf*, al-Manfalūḥī revealed the profound influence the *Shaikh* had had on him.

#### 5.4 His Culture and Education

First of all, his culture was Arabic and Islamic. This was the culture from which he derived his subtle and delicate senses, his fertile mind with which he would in time produce literature which satisfied delicate tastes, and his subject matter which he could present to his readers in a new style, a style which was simple, but clear and effective.

Al-Manfalūḥī spoke about himself in his introduction to *al-Naḥārāt* and explained that he started to read literature as from the age of thirteen. What motivated him was his desire for and inclination towards literature, and that he depended on himself in his readings. Abū al-Anwār quotes from *al-Naḥārāt*: “There was no one around me during that time who asked them (*al-Azhar* lecturers) for help in somebody’s literature so much as I did because it was my first experience (with literature)... and I did not yet reach the age of thirteen amongst those elderly type of *al-Azhar shaikhs*...” (2000: 51).

He mentioned that he depended on his special feelings (“the beating of his heart”) when he weighed and compared the different literary works and styles. He chose what he found beautiful and discarded that which did not impress him: “My position was that of someone who listened to the beating of a drum – he chooses the melodious and rejects all other (tunes)”. It was clear that he derived and based his literary works on his Arabic heritage, whether poetry or prose, because he wrote about (and quoted) many ancient works from various periods which he, for example, gathered in his *al-Mukhtārāt*. He considered his

formative years which he spent reading as the happiest time of his life, saying that after so many years he could still remember that period, and when he thought of it, he could feel sensations in his blood.

His literary works showed that he read most of the major literary sources in Arabic literature. He read the works of various periods, for example that of al-Jāḥiḥ, al-Jurjānī, Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, Abū al-Farj al-Aḥfahānī, Abū ʿAlī al-Qālī and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, as well as the books of al-Mutanabbī, Abū Nawās, Abū al-ʿAlā al-Maʿarrī, and so forth. He once said that he had read whatever he wanted of Arabic poetry and prose, present and past, in a thorough and insightful way.

In addition, he was the student of *Imām* Muḥammad ʿAbduh who was greatly involved with the science of Arabic rhetoric, and it was said that al-Manfalūḥī actually qualified at the hands of the *Imām* because he studied the two books *Asrār al-Balāgha* (The Secrets of Rhetorical Literature) and *Dalāʾil al-Ijāz* (The Evidence of Inimitability [of the *Qurʾān*]) under the *Imām*. Furthermore, al-Manfalūḥī established a literature club at his house where various books from the earlier periods were read and discussed. He wrote an essay in 1906 in which he recorded the history of ancient and modern Arabic writing styles. This article revealed his critical abilities and his extensive reading of Arabic literature throughout its various developmental stages.

His strong connection to the Arabic heritage enabled him to write in a novel style, a style free of *sajʿ* and *badīʿ*. Even in his early youth he used to read *Alf Laila wa Laila*, the biography of Saif bin Thū Yazan, the wars of *Antara*, the events of *Abū Zaid* and the fables of *al-Jinn wa al-Shayāḥīn*. He also read the Arabic literature of his contemporaries, and expressed his opinions about it in two famous essays *Ṭabaqāt al-Shuʿarāʾ* (The Categories of Poets) and *Ṭabaqāt al-Kuttāb* (The Categories of Writers).

Besides his Arabic culture, al-Manfalūḥī had his Islamic culture. This aspect of his life he did not neglect; on the contrary, he had a profound understanding of it and a great love for it. He was of the opinion that the knowledge of literature was the best means to understand the book of God (*al-Qurʾān*) and *al-sunna* (words, deeds and approvals of the prophet Muḥammad). The essays he wrote on *Islām* did not only reveal correct understanding of the *dīn* and a profound culture, but also an ability to debate and to defend *Islām*. This showed that he possessed a complete and perfect understanding of *Islām*. What helped him tremendously in his two cultures, the Arabic language and its literature and *Islām*, were his lively senses, fertile mind and keen observation.

Furthermore, he displayed an ardent interest in all kinds of modern culture and education. He spoke about the universe, astronomy, geology, ancient history, archaeology,

and spoke like someone who knew what he was speaking about, often using modern technical terms.

Besides all of this, al-Manfalūḡī read many translations that included romantic short stories, classical plays, non-narrative literary texts, science books, and essays with technical definitions. He was able to write about what he heard or read in translations that showed that he had a good memory and that he was highly impressed with Western writers, especially from France. It is believed that had the man known a foreign language well, he would have played an even greater role in Arabic literary history (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 51-55).

### 5.5 His Fame and Reputation with Readers

Abū al-Anwār refers to what Professor Aḡmad Ḥasan Zayyāt said concerning the change in literature which al-Manfalūḡī initiated and which attracted so much attention:

Our Lebanese brothers in America and Egypt opened the windows of Arabic literature to the literature of the West, and showed us a literary art unknown in Arab literature, but it was weak in structure, confusing as a (literary) model, and we disliked it like we disliked the *maqāma* style ... and then the style of al-Manfalūḡī dawned in *al-Mu'ayyid* ... and writers and readers saw a new art which did not appear in the paragraphs of Jāḡi ... or in newspapers or in translations. So we welcomed it as a camel would (welcome) the only drinking place, and the youth would await the appearance of *al-Mu'ayyid* every Thursday in order to read al-Manfalūḡī's articles five, six, seven times ... and all of them wished that they could physically and mentally connect to al-Manfalūḡī whom God had chosen as the messenger for this virgin literature (2000: 55-56).

Al-Manfalūḡī occupied this position in literature when he was only thirty-one years of age. He would afterwards make a great impression and travel to the furthest horizons of fame. Abū al-Anwār quotes other opinions about al-Manfalūḡī – the orientalist Brockelmann described him as follows: “He was the most famous essayist of the twentieth century”; Aḡmad Shākir al-Karamī said: “He was more widely known than his contemporaries”; likewise, the magazine *al-'Irfān* related: “He was by far the most famous author of his time” (2000: 56). Al-Manfalūḡī gained this unheard of fame at the time not only in Egypt, but in the whole Arab world, especially Syria and Lebanon.

His literature captivated an Anglican priest in Lebanon so much that he recited al-Manfalūḡī's *qaḡīda* ‘Paul and Virginia’ to his congregation who received it well. Perhaps this was the first Arabic *qaḡīda* recited from a church pulpit during prayers, and maybe the last too (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 56-57).

Readers from the whole length and breadth of Egypt and from all other Arab countries

sent hundreds of letters to the press. The letters contained various questions on daily happenings, actualities, and social and moral issues. Aḥmad ḥāfiʿ ʿAwaḥ said that the nation regarded him as the beacon light which must guide them through the darkness of doubt, and as their refuge to whom they can run to in times of difficulty (Al-Jābī 2003: I/49-50). Writing about Arab poets and poetry, the words of H.A.R. Gibb might as well have applied to al-Manfalūḥī as well: "... the man who, by skilful ordering of vivid imagery in taut, rightly nuanced phrases, could play upon the emotions of his hearers, was not merely lauded as an artist but venerated as the protector and guarantor of the honour of the tribe and a potent weapon against its enemies" (1963: 29).

Due to his fame, al-Manfalūḥī was elected as a member of the Arabic Scientific Society in Damascus. On the fortieth day after al-Manfalūḥī's death, this Society would commemorate his demise, and one of its members, the poet Shafīq Jabrī, wrote a *rithā'* in honour of the position which al-Manfalūḥī had held in society. After his death, as during his lifetime, a lot of discussion and debate around him and his literary works took place, which is evidence of the literary place that he occupied in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 57).

As was seen in his biographic details (chapter 4), al-Manfalūḥī's relationship with especially the three mentioned personalities also influenced his writings profoundly. The dedications he wrote to them bear this out very clearly. Besides being close and sincere friends, *Imām* Muḥammad ʿAbduh was his religious (and literary) mentor, Saʿad Pāsha Zaghlūl supported him politically and financially and *Shaikh* ʿAlī Yūsuf provided him with the opportunity to practice his writing skills (and thereby made him known to the public) in his newspaper. His innovative, simple writing style and sincere concern about his society and their suffering influenced and endeared him to the people across the Arab world.

## **Chapter 6**

### **The Literary Compositions of Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī**

As will be seen in the discussion of his compositions in this section, al-Manfalūṭī was concerned with his land of birth, he experienced the sufferings of his fellow citizens, and tried in word and deed to guide his nation to the correct way of life. He was clear in his thoughts and expressions, whether in narratives or articles, identifying a social problem, uncovering its reasons and consequences, and then writing about it in a way that reconciled the conservative and reformist tendencies. He was always positive in his assessments, believing that the religion of *Islām* was the only basis for sound and solid social thought and welfare. In his stories he leaned towards romanticism, describing in his sensitive and lugubrious style the condition of the less fortunate, miserable and oppressed in his society. To this end he used translations of French works that were filled with the qualities of moral virtue and which abounded with human suffering, sorrow and misery. In the words of Qāsim: "... he did with his prose what the poets did with their poetry ... he carried in himself and in his prose style the same feelings and emotions as those of a poet ..." (2001: 28). His style indicated a sensitivity to the musical qualities and emotive power of words and his "rhythmical, evocative, emotional, and sometimes repetitive prose (was) ... best appreciated aloud ..." (Le Gassick 1979: 47-8).

As for his compositions, Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī produced the following:

1. *Al-Naḥārāt* (Philosophical Reflections)
2. *Mukhtārāt al-Manfalūṭī* (al-Manfalūṭī's Selections)
3. *Magdalene*
4. *Al-`Abarāt* (The Tears)
5. *Fī Sabīl al-Tāj* (For the sake of the Crown)



6. *Al-Shā`ir* (The Poet)
7. *Al-Faḍīla* (Moral Excellence or Virtue)

A brief look will be given to each, the main aim being to see what his topics were, why he wrote them, how his personality comes through in his writings, to show why his essays were good and popular, why his style was effective, the type of short stories he Arabicised and last but not least, his views on especially social issues and how he used the stories to spread these views.

The books will be dealt with in the chronological order of their publication.

#### 6.1 *Al-Naḍarāt* (Philosophical Reflections)

Al-Manfalūḥī described this book as follows: “It is a selection of ‘*rasā’il*’ (that is, essays and articles) which the author wrote in the newspaper *al-Mu’ayyid* and in other newspapers under the title *al-Naḍarāt* or other titles, and also *rasā’il* which he wrote, but did not publish. It is also the short pieces of poetry and poetic *qaḍidas* (which he wrote) in various newspapers and magazines” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 59). Some of the stories are from translations and not works written by himself (Al-Jābī 2002: I/10).

In fact, the collection treats various aspects of life: social, literary, religious, and political. It also includes the different literary forms of *maqāla* and *qiṣṣa* (Al-Jābī 2003: I/13). He uses various literary styles to get his message over to the reader: the direct method, indirect method, the short story, the essay, report style and dialogue. He treats issues in an advisory and very truthful way, trying to move his society and its individuals to the highest levels of progress, superiority and usefulness (Al-Jābī 2003: I/14).

Al-Manfalūḥī’s personality, mentally and emotionally, and his manner of expression, come across very clearly in the book. In describing the book, professor Hārith al-Rāwī said: “Although the book (*al-Naḍarāt*) is not noted for its depth and profound analysis, it does contain meditative and contemplative reflections which at times penetrate deeply into man’s inner self, and his opinions about reforming society do contain correct analyses and successful explanations and justifications” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 59). This was a good description because al-Manfalūḥī himself said that the book was “of the general story, fantasy and ideational type of books” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 59).

He started to write it in the year 1907 (Qāsim 2001: 29) and the first edition was published in 1910, and consisted of four hundred and forty pages, eight hundred and thirty one essays and twelve *qaḍidas*. He did not write “volume 1” or “part 1” on it, but it was

regarded as such. Part 2 of *al-Naḥārāt* appeared on 15 May 1912 and part 3 in 1921. Part 1 was reprinted on 15 October 1913 (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 59-60). In his opening address to the book, al-Manfalūḥī wrote concerning the publication of the second edition: “After that I did not look at the book once until I knew that I shall reprint it. I looked at it like a stranger (who has not read or seen the book previously). I was able to see its good (points) and its bad (points), so I omitted the unbeneficial from it, and added to it what I knew whose authenticity is better than (that which was) unconfirmed. I revised and refined many of its expressions and omitted of its mistakes, lapses and that which was unsuitable. So, the second edition was better than the first, more accurate and more beneficial ...” (quoted in al-Jābī 2002: I/25-26).

Towards the end of the introduction, he lists four things that helped him write, expressing the hope that lovers of literature would find benefit from it:

1. He did not use unnecessary words, only words that had the required and desired meaning. He also did not imply other meanings with the words that he used, only their natural, normal meaning. In other words, what he said and what he wrote meant the same.
2. He did not have to exert himself very much when writing – he noticed and observed, and then thought, then wrote, and finally published. His writing would, unintentionally, gladden some people sometimes and anger other people at other times.
3. When he wrote on non-fictional or fictional issues, he used to mix the truth and reality with some imagination because he knew that truth without imagination did not have a significant effect on the listener or reader, and did not influence the heart.
4. He did not write to impress the readers, but rather to benefit them and to affect them (Al-Manfalūḥī 2002: I/180-2).

His *maqālāt* were excellent from two angles: his style and the topic of the essay. As for style, it contained no *saj`* and *badī`* and colloquial Arabic. Although he read the works of many ancient writers, as was mentioned, he did not imitate them, but succeeded in becoming an innovative stylist. It was a style that the reader readily accepted – by touching his heart and arousing his feelings, he found artistic joy in it. As for his topics, his milieu was the social life in Egypt. Like his mentor, *Imām`* Abduh, he strove for social reformation: he spoke about the wrongs in society (like dancing, gambling, wine and the moral decline of the youth), poverty, wealth and the wealthy, the bad influence of certain Western habits and customs, calling to moral excellence, mercy and compassion, and so forth. He took great care to do this with musical words, as if the people did not read with their eyes in the newspapers,

but they heard the words with their ears before they reached their eyes (Ḍaif 1974: 230-31).

His style was also effective because he at times addressed the readers like *Imāms* addressed their congregations in sermons from the pulpit: *Ayyuhā al-insān!* (O man!) and repeated words, for example, *irḥam, irḥam* (show mercy, show mercy). It was also clear that he was influenced by contemporary orators like Muḥḥafā Kāmil (who was frequently mentioned in chapter 2) and, as mentioned before, *Shaikh* `Abduh. He wrote a lot about *Islām* and the Muslims, crying for the sad position they were in. He rebuked them for neglecting their religious duties and for disobeying the orders and prohibitions of the *dīn*. In this context, he also blamed Western civilization for corrupting the morals of the young boys and girls (Ḍaif 1974: 232-33). This aspect will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 7 (Al-Manfalūḥī and Religion).

Besides these, many of al-Manfalūḥī's *maqālāt* were not published in book form, but remained in newspapers, especially *al-Mu'ayyid* (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 60). It is interesting to note that '*al-Naḥarāt*' was also published (posthumously) according to its topics, for example: *Ijtimā'īyyāt* (social), *Wajdāniyyāt* (emotional / sentimental), *Rithā'* (elegy), *Dīn* (religious), *Adabiyyāt* (literary), *Siyāsiyyāt* (political), *Rasā'il* (epistles), and *Qiṣṣa* (short stories). By far the most were *Ijtimā'īyyāt* (46), followed by *wajdāniyyāt* (13) and *dīn* (7) and then *rithā'* (6). There are about 4 on *adabiyyāt*, 2 on *siyāsiyyāt* and 1 *risāla*. The number of short stories amounted to about 25 (Al-Jābī 2002: I/22). Al-Jābī mentions seven articles that were omitted in the subsequent prints of volume 1 (2002: 20). He includes them in his collection (pages 81 to 131) before al-Manfalūḥī's introduction, "so that students and researchers can benefit ... and (so that it can) be of better service to contemporary readers ... and to make the collection complete ..." (2002: 132).

## 6.2 *Mukhtārāt al-Manfalūḥī* (Al-Manfalūḥī's Selections)

This book was compiled to provide the growing children with a means to cultivate their literary tastes. It consisted of literary selections from various literary periods (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 60). It covered the works of his favourite authors, mentioned previously (chapter 4) and the great poets like Abū Tamām, Ibn Rūmi and Abū al-'Alā (Ḍaif 1974: 228). Buḥrus al-Bustānī said in *Udabā' al-'Arab* (*Arab Belles-Lettres*):

(It is) a collection of poems which he (al-Manfalūḥī) chose for the school students ... in addition there is prose for the benefit of the primary, secondary and the university students, so that they can know (Arabic) poetry, language, rhetoric and general literature. He gathered the best of poetry and prose, ancient and modern, and from every aspect of Arabic art and its aims, to benefit the students in refining their rhetoric and eloquence

of their tongues, polishing of their mind, and to inform them about the advantages, favours, worth and importance of their language (Al-Jābī 2002: I/10-11).

The book did not actually represent a literary work of al-Manfalūḡī, but rather expressed his artistic sensibilities and taste in selection. It was published on 15 March 1912, two months before part 2 of *al-Naḡarāt* was published. Only one volume was printed and circulated (Qāsim 2001: 29). Some erudite scholars used this compilation as a reference work in their literary productions. This indicated that they had great confidence in its accuracy and reliability (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 60).

The collection consists of 23 essays in which al-Manfalūḡī gives his opinions about the Egyptian society in particular and the Arab society in general. It also contains some of his complaints about political and social issues.

Looking at some of the essays, we find that the opening one is about his extreme stand against drinking and gambling and his belief that they are the basis for all crime that threatens the security and peace of a society. The essays and stories about these two vices in society portray the consequences and fate of anyone who follows this road. The alcoholic hero would lose his mind and enter an institution for the mentally sick. Most of the stories on social issues contained his firm belief and message to society, namely that once a person chooses the road of evil and immorality, s(he) is bound to travel that path to its bitter end.

He further expressed his opinion in the essay *al-ḡijāb* in *al-Mukhtārāt* that the wearing of the ḡijāb must be adhered to, because discarding it would drag the society into serious problems. Consequently, no comparison must be made between the Egyptian and European woman for the circumstances in Eastern and Western societies are totally different (see al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (c): 996-1003).

*Al-ḡijāb* was a social essay written in the form of a story that the author wrote in the context of the debates that raged between the conservatives and the reformers (as was detailed previously). It treats the issue of the wearing of ḡijāb of which the writer was a staunch and enthusiastic supporter (Būqarī 1979: 85). In the story the hero, who was an ardent supporter and propagator of discarding the veil, leaves his wife free to mix with his friends and to socialise with men as she wished, until it finally ended with the author's intended message, namely, that the wife cheated the husband with his closest friend. The author even goes further by ending the story in his customary dramatic way, namely, the husband commits suicide on discovering his wife's deception. This was the bad result when women do not adhere to the ḡijāb!

In another essay *al-Ba`th* (The Resurrection), al-Manfalūḡī imagines that the famous,

incisive philosopher and humanist Abū al-A`lā al-Ma`arrī (973-1057, author of *Saqt al-Zand* [Spark of the Fire-stick] and *Risālāt*) returns to life for three days after living for eighty years. He acted as al-Manfalūṭī's guest, and he made use of the opportunity to discuss with Abū al-A`lā his opinions about food, clothes, drink, a human being's relationship with people and other creations (see al-Manfalūṭī 2003 (c): 942).

He ends his essays on wealth and the wealthy, with the firm opinion that encouraging one another to seek wealth is the greatest disease and the reason for all declines, and yet the Egyptians still make wealth their dream. Then he emphasises that the quest after money is a concern in every human society, even to the extent where individuals in societies go to war and fight one another to death. No one has mercy on the other, and the blood of honour, virtue and righteousness flows under the feet of the adversaries. Under such circumstances, the attainment of happiness is impossible, because happiness is inner calmness, peace of mind and a noble heart. A person must see with his / her own eyes the fruits of his / her efforts, like a farmer feels proud, happy and pleased at the sight of the greenness and growth of a plant which s(he) him / herself had planted and watered with the sweat of his / her forehead (Ṣarād 2003: 934).

### 6.3 *Magdalene*

This story, 'Arabized' by al-Manfalūṭī, appeared in two stages. Some of it was published as an addendum to *al-Naṣarāt* on 15 May 1912. He wrote in the forward that it was taken from a story by Alfons Karr (1808-1890) called *Sous le Tilleul* (*Taṭ ilāl al-Zayzafūn*, 'Under the Zizyphus Tree'). The author relied on the correspondence method (the main characters wrote letters to one another) to relate the unfolding of events in the story, leaving the imagination to play a vital role in the dynamics of the characters in the natural environment that the author loved and that he had made the fundamental milieu of his story.

After praising the author and his story, al-Manfalūṭī explained how he 'Arabized' it. He listened to his friend, the learned Muḥammad Fu'ād Bek Kamāl, who translated to him the aims and meaning of the story. He would then proceed to write what he had heard without abiding to the original, adding and omitting, and changing the order of events if necessary. His wish was fulfilled when the whole story was published as an independent book (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 61-62). It is related that al-Manfalūṭī told the translator what he needed because the Romantic leanings that he had, like Alfons Karr, were present in the stories. The concepts of virtue, justice, help for the poor, and criticism of the wealthy, were also found in the translations. He would, however, write it anew in an easy and flowing style, complete

freedom with the run of events, and with moral messages, advice and instructions (Daif 1974: 229).

Al-Manfalūḡī was attracted to Karr's story due to the clear call and invitation to hold onto the values of truth, goodness and beauty that are personified in a simple, countryside environment. The events of the story unfold in the countryside that is distinguished by its simplicity, spontaneity, truthfulness, sincerity and determination; in other words, the same type of environment from which al-Manfalūḡī originated. This life is contrasted with life in the city, a life based on deception, lies, cheating and hypocrisy, where mankind gathers wealth without due concern for the most basic principles of moral values. The story tries to emphasize that the sharp difference between the rural and urban environment leads to an even sharper difference in the understanding of happiness: the one believes that happiness is the result of mankind's reconciliation, adaptability and conformity with their real, natural environment that they find themselves in; the other one believes that money is the key to happiness, irrespective of the methods used to earn it (ḡarād 2003: 460).

He dispersed his advice and guidance, which agreed with the understanding of morals in his environment, throughout the story, because most of his readers were young girls and boys from Egypt and other Arab countries (ḡarād 2003: 460).

This was a story about human emotions in the field of love. Simultaneously it uncovered the role which separation between two lovers plays in life. Each one saw the quest for happiness in a different way. Poverty prevented the young, sincere man in love from winning the love of the girl who was fascinated with the glitter of life. She met another man, a deceiving friend of the youth who loved her, but she would soon discover her love for the first man. She realised that love is something much loftier than the cheap, worldly things that she had lost within a day and night. It dawned on her that she was running after a deceptive mirage and that she was unable to achieve happiness through worldly chattels. Due to her wrong understanding of love and happiness, she had lost everything: wealth, marriage, love and, ultimately, life. The man who loved her was eaten up by sadness and suffering until he sacrificed his own life out of love and faith next to his beloved's grave.

More particularly, the story is basically about a boy named Estafan who stemmed from a middle class family and who loved reading and music. By nature he was an introvert and found happiness by avoiding people. He left his home to live in a humble room when his mother died and his father remarried. There he fell in love with the owner of house's daughter, Magdalene. She returned his affection and changed his view of life and filled his heart with hope and happiness. They would meet frequently in different places, like on the riverbank, under the zizyphus tree in the middle of the house's garden, or at the lake near the

house. They dreamed of the future life that they would lead together and about the house with a garden filled with zizyphus trees that they would own.

Their happiness was shattered by the girl's father who maintained that the boy was not suitable for her. He ordered Estafan to leave the house. The two lovers met for a last time, exchanging vows of loyalty and strands of hair that would be rings on their fingers until they would meet again.

The separation between Magdalene and Estafan was physical only. Their spiritual relationship remained strong through the love letters that they exchanged. Estafan returned to his father's house where the latter wanted him to marry a wealthy girl. He refused, being still in love with Magdalene, and, out of anger, his father threw him out of his house, with the instruction not to return. The young man went to search for work, hoping to gather enough money to realize his and Magdalene's shared dreams.

Estafan met a man, Eduard, who was about to inherit a great amount of money, and the two became friends. In the meantime, Magdalene met a girl, Suzanne, who taught her the ways of the wealthy. Magdalene got used to wearing jewellery and expensive clothes and to mix with Suzanne's rich acquaintances. She confided in Suzanne about her love for Estafan. Suzanne wanted her to marry Eduard who could make her happy with his huge inheritance.

The days passed and Estafan inherited a huge sum of money from one of his uncles. He hurriedly bought a house, with a garden containing zizyphus trees, and went to Magdalene to surprise her. He would discover that his love was engaged to Eduard, and on her finger was her fiancée's diamond ring instead of his lock of hair that she had promised would remain there until her death.

Estafan lost his mind, neglected himself, and was put into a mental asylum where he thought of committing suicide. Magdalene and Eduard visited him and confirmed that the two of them would get married. Estafan buried himself in music and became very skilful at it. As for Eduard, his relationship with his wife, Magdalene soured, and his financial position deteriorated. He lost all his money in gambling and drinking and was declared insolvent. He had to sell his castle, and eventually committed suicide far from his wife's side. Magdalene, who was expecting a baby, had to sell her father's house in order to settle her husband's debts.

As the days passed, Magdalene did not lead a good life. She returned to Estafan who, she discovered, still loved her. He helped her look after her daughter, but his pride prevented him from marrying her. He would not forgive her for what she had accused him of nor for what she did to him. Magdalene would eventually commit suicide in the river where they used to meet. Estafan himself would take his own life soon afterwards. They were buried in

the same grave, thereby uniting in death when they were separated in life (Al-Manfalūḡī n.d: 667-889).

*Magdalene* was received with much excitement after its issue because the majority of readers were highly impressed with it. Many letters were written to the press by prominent people expressing the impact which the story had had made on them. They dubbed it ‘The Egyptian *Magdalene*’ (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 62).

#### 6.4 *Al-`Abarāt* (The Tears)

This book appeared in 1915 and was a collection of short stories, some of them were al-Manfalūḡī’s own compositions and some were based on translated material (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 62). Al-Manfalūḡī ‘Arabized’ a group of short stories of some French writers, added some of his own compositions, and published them under the name *al-`Abarāt*. All of the stories were sad and lamentable (Ḍaif 1974: 229). His aim was to use the *qiḡḡa* as a means to treat certain topics, to involve the reader’s feelings and sensibilities, and to spread his ideas and opinions. Therefore, the stories did not strictly follow the artistic principles of the *qiḡḡa* (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 62).

Al-Manfalūḡī undoubtedly spoiled the French stories with his ‘Arabization’ because he changed the original as if he thought the *qiḡḡa* was a group of *maqālāt* without structure. The stories lacked some imagination, precision in observation of life events, experience in characterization, and twists in the plots. However, what distinguishes these short stories is his purity of style, a style that made his essays popular amongst the youth of his time (Ḍaif 1974: 229-30).

As was his custom, he included a dedication, this time to all the wretched in the world:

The wretched in the world are many, and it is not in the power of a miserable person like me to remove even a little of their suffering and misery. The least I can do is to present them with this *al-`Abarāt* in the hope that they will find in my tears for them consolation, solace and comfort (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003: 825).

The stories which he himself wrote are *al-Yatīm* (The Orphan), *al-ḡijāb* (The Veil), *al-Hāwiya* (The Abyss) and *al-`Iqāb* (Obstacles). The stories he asked his friend to translate are *al-Shuhadā* (The Martyrs), *al-Thikrā* (The Memoirs), *al-Jazā* (The Reward) and *al-Dāhiyya* (Catastrophe) (ḡarād 2003: 822). Qāsim believes that *al-`Iqāb* was based on a translated American story called ‘The Cry of the Grave’ (2001: 29). As in most of his stories, these *qiḡḡa* also portray, as the name *al-`Abarāt* indicates, the sadness, grief,



disappointment and wretchedness of the heroes and heroines. His magical style and skill at describing the feelings and sensibilities of the characters in poignant, distressing and heart-rending situations again comes to the fore. He excelled in winning the readers over and making them participate in liberally shedding tears for the victims of circumstances. The paper *al-Muqataṭaf* praised these efforts of al-Manfalūḡī, saying “(he is) of our best writers, and we thank him for writing literary narratives that give the reader great enjoyment, and his beneficial advice on morals and (for giving them) a glimpse of the (beauty of the Arabic) language” (quoted in Jabbūr 1983: x).

As examples of these *qiṡaṡ* five (two originals and three translations) will be summarized. They illustrate his Romantic leanings and his concern with the wretched and their suffering, and the empathy they elicit in the reader.

#### 6.4.1 *Al-Yatīm* (The Orphan)

This is one of al-Manfalūḡī's own stories and is about a young boy whose father had passed away. He then grew up with his cousin, an only daughter, in his uncle's house. Although they grew up like brother and sister, they actually loved each other, but without the one telling the other about it. When the uncle died, his wife asked the boy to leave the house in order to protect her daughter's honour because she had reached the age of marriage. He left the house without greeting his cousin and took up residence in a house next to al-Manfalūḡī's. The girl soon became very ill due to the tremendous sorrow the departure of her beloved had caused. She eventually died. The boy himself was grief-stricken at the news about his cousin's demise. This was the state in which al-Manfalūḡī found the boy. He related his whole life story to the author. The orphan committed suicide and the writer, according to the boy's last instructions, buried him in the girl's grave (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003: 826-34).

#### 6.4.2 *Al-Shuhadā'* (The Martyrs)

This story is based on a translation from French. It is a narrative about a woman who lost her husband after her brother had left for America. She lived alone with her only child in poverty, suffering and misery. When the boy became a teenager he studied art, and succeeded to travel with a group of artists to America where they would display their paintings. He was successful, and made use of his presence in America to search for his uncle. He would eventually be kidnapped by some Blacks who threatened to kill him. A

white girl was, however, able to help him escape from his captors. The two youths fled through the dark night. The boy fell in love with the girl, but she was unwilling to reciprocate the feeling for reasons she would not tell him. He would later discover that she was his uncle's daughter. He was murdered by his kidnappers, and she had promised God to commit suicide by drinking poison from a little bottle which she always carried with her, if she ever fell in love and wanted to get married. She then drank the poison. The boy approached the dying girl and gave her a kiss. The poison from her mouth entered his body and they died together. They were buried in the same grave. The boy's mother would also soon pass away due to the yearning and pining for her son's return (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003: 834-46).

#### 6.4.3 *Al-Thikrā* (Memoirs)

This is also a translated story and relates the story of Abū `Abd Allāh, the last Arab king in *al-Andalus*. He fought his father and uncle after he had asked them for assistance against his enemy. He was attacked and defeated, and the new king of Spain ordered him to leave the country and go to *al-Maghrib* (Morocco). Arab rule of Spain had ended after eight centuries. Before Abū `Abd Allāh boarded the boat that would take him to *al-Maghrib*, he heard a voice rebuking him about his deed and reminding him of a poet's words:

Cry like women (for) a kingdom lost  
You did not preserve and safeguard it like men

Abū `Abd Allāh regretted fighting his father and uncle, but his remorse was in vain. He realised the big, scandalous mistake he had made. After twenty-four years, King Abū `Abd Allāh's son travelled to *al-Andalus* disguised in an Arab doctor's uniform, supposedly treating patients with herbs. He met a Spanish girl from whom he learned a lot about the history of the time when his forefathers ruled Spain. He fell in love with her and declared his love. She returned his love in equal measure. The fact that they followed different religions became a barrier to their marriage. The relationship was complicated by the mayor's son who also loved the girl, but she did not love him. Out of revenge, he reported the man to the police who arrested and jailed him. The court ruled that he be put to death for trying to encourage the Christian girl to forsake her religion, which was a heinous crime under Spanish law at the time (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003: 855-65).

#### 6.4.4 *Al-Hāwiya* (The Abyss)

*Al-Hāwiya* is another of al-Manfalūḡī's original stories. It does not differ much from his previous *qiḡa* in which he treats social issues of his time and in which he propagates one of his beliefs that he presents in most of his *qiḡa* namely that the road to evil is one, and once you travel that road, there is no turning back.

The story revolves around a countryside youth who happened to grow up in the great city of Cairo. A strong friendship developed between the writer and the man. Due to circumstances, al-Manfalūḡī had to leave Cairo. He greeted his friend, and the two promised to keep in touch with each other by correspondence. Soon afterwards, the friend's letters to the author gradually decreased until they totally stopped.

When the writer returned from the countryside, he rushed over to visit his old friend in his house. He was astounded to learn that his friend had become addicted to gambling and wine drinking. He had squandered all his money, and treated his family badly. Al-Manfalūḡī promised his friend's wife that he would do everything in his power to save him from the tribulations he found himself in. No matter what the author did and no matter what he said, he could not convince or persuade his close friend to stop drinking and gambling. His addiction was so severe that he did not listen to any advice given.

The friend continued his drinking, neglecting the family as always. One day, while he was away from home, his wife gave birth to a baby girl. The woman died seconds after birth due to a high fever on a very cold night. The only one with her was her baby who was sucking her breast. When the drunkard returned in the morning, he, on approaching his 'sleeping' wife, noticed that she had died. The baby was still crying next to her. On stepping back, bewildered by the horrible sight, he trampled unknowingly on the baby's chest, killing it instantly. The man ended up in a mental asylum (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003: 865-72).

#### 6.4.5 *Al-Jazā'* (The Reward)

This is another *qiḡa* based on a French translation. A beautiful, innocent girl, Suzanne, grew up in the same house in a village with her cousin, Gilbert. The two fell in love and agreed to get married one day. Fate decided otherwise because she would meet a man from the noble class who was on a journey to the countryside. He was attracted to her beauty when he saw her fill a bucket of water from a small lake next to her house. After repeated visits to the lake he introduced himself, and the young girl fancied him when she learned that he was the *Markīz* (army commander) Justin Rustan who owned a huge castle on the hill opposite the village. He enticed her to his castle, and she submitted to him after he promised to marry her.

Her cousin learned from his mother that his love ran away with the *Markīz*, never to return to him. The boy almost became totally mad, and tried to convince himself to forget her, but he realised that his wound was too deep to heal. He wandered around aimlessly, carrying his pain and anguish until close to death. At that moment Suzanne was surprised by her husband who had returned from a journey that lasted a few days. He threw a bag of money in front of her, ordering her to leave his house with her small baby. She reluctantly agreed and left the castle in the village clothes she had come with the first time, and left the bag of money behind. Suzanne wandered around aimlessly in the field next to the castle. She was astonished at a heart-rending voice which originated from somewhere nearby. She went towards the sound to find her pale, thin cousin crying farewell to her. As she knelt down, his last teardrop fell on her hand before he died. Out of great grief and regret, she covered her baby with part of her clothes, bade it farewell, and threw herself into the river beside and near the *Markīz*'s castle. At that moment the *Markīz* was sitting on his balcony with his new girlfriend. He saw the drowning person and ordered his servants to remove the body from the water. The baby also passed away at that time.

The *Markīz*'s girlfriend learned what he had done and left him for her family. The *Markīz* wandered aimlessly about his castle after the death of his wife and their baby, and the absence of his lover. He remained in this state until the people saw his body drifting in the same river where, just the day before, Suzanne had drowned (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003: 872-81).

### 6.5 *Fī Sabīl al-Tāj* (For the Sake of the Crown)

This story appeared on the first of June 1920. It was based on (or rather adapted from) the play *Pour la Couronne* which was written by the French writer Francois Coppée. As with *Magdalene*, his friend Muḡammad Fu'ād Bek Kamāl, translated the French version for him (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 62).

The story also has an introduction in which al-Manfalūḡī provides some background to the events that would unfold in the story. The introduction is followed by a dedication to his political mentor Sa`ad Zaghlūl. He calls him 'The Egyptian Hero'. In it he compares the bravery, steadfastness, determination, sincerity, zeal and sacrifices of Zaghlūl to that of the hero of the story, Constantine.

The story described the struggle of a people against the usurping aggressors, the struggle of the self when it is confronted with sacrifice, either for its country or for its family, and the struggle of the self when it must choose between the reputation, dignity and honour of family and personal honour and life. Eventually the love of country would triumph over

love of family so that the country can remain secure and safe, and love of family would triumph over love of self when the hero sacrificed his own life by preferring to go to the guillotines instead of telling the truth which would have exposed his father as a traitor, and even though he knew that his father was already dead.

The setting of the story was the Balkans where the Balkanians defended their country. One of the main characters was Bishop Etienne who was, in al-Manfalūḡī's words, "the most superior in intelligence, the most knowledgeable and the most powerful in controlling the army and the populace" (quoted in ḡarād 2003: 402). He gathered the army and people, and urged King Milovich to revolt against the occupying Turks.

After the King's death, two persons were qualified to lead the country, namely Etienne and the army general, Michel Brancomir. The people chose Etienne as their new king, leaving Brancomir in control of the army.

Brancomir had a son called Constantine, and when his wife died, he married a very beautiful woman, a Greek by the name of Bazilid. She was so beautiful and desirable that she took possession of his whole heart and all his feelings.

One of the Turkish leaders was able to encourage Bazilid to try and install her husband as king. War broke out when the Turkish army set fire to the frontline borders, no one knowing when it would end and what the consequences would be.

Due to her cunningness and her power, Bazilid was able to convince her husband to make an attempt on the king's life. Michel went to the frontier in a knight's uniform to execute his treason. Constantine learned from a gypsy lady (whom he saved from a Turkish soldier who had accosted and molested her) about his father's plan and went to the frontier to persuade him to abandon his mission. The father refused and the son killed him with his sword. When the Balkan soldiers discovered their general's corpse, they thought that he had died bravely fighting the enemy in the battle and regarded him a martyr. They established a monument for him as an immortal remembrance.

Despite her husband's death, the woman continued in her endeavour to get, this time, her son Constantine on the throne, oblivious to the fact that he killed his father for his treachery. When he eventually told her what had really happened, she became very upset and vowed to avenge her husband's death. She informed the king that her son Constantine wanted to commit treason to his country. This is where Constantine is faced with a dilemma: he must either admit the truth and then his father's reputation as a national hero and martyr will be ruined, or he must be killed on the guillotine and then be regarded as a traitor of his country. He preferred to sacrifice himself for the sake of his father's reputation and the honour of his family.

The real truth would surface shortly before the death of Bazilid, namely after thirty five years. The people only then realized that the real hero and martyr was the son Constantine (Al-Manfalūḡī 2001: 43-124).

#### 6.6 *Al-Shā`ir* (The Poet)

This story was based on the play *Cyrano de Bergerac* by the great French writer Edmond Rostand. It is one of the world's most wonderful plays. Al-Manfalūḡī discovered this story when he was "entrusted by Doctor Muḡammad `Abd al- Salām al-Jundī ... to revise and rectify its translation for an acting group" (Al-Manfalūḡī 1983: 5). He published it in Ramaḡān 1339 AH, corresponding to May 1921 (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 63).

He thus changed the play genre to that of a short story. In his introduction, as has become one of his trademarks, he says in this connection:

I have tried to abide by the original in its entirety, and controlled myself to only remove sentences that were of no importance or added only expressions that were necessary for the context. He who reads the Arabicized version is reading the actual French original ... I changed it from a play into a short story so that the reader can see it on paper as the audience sees it in the theatre (Al-Manfalūḡī 1983: 6).

As has also become al-Manfalūḡī's norm in most of his stories, he included a dedication:

*Ilā al-Shu`arā`* (To all Poets) – The composer of this story is a poet, its hero is a poet, most of its characters are poets, and its topic is poetry and literature. Its lesson and consideration is that the poetic self is the most beautiful thing in the world and the most eloquent picture of creation that a great painter's brush paints... I therefore dedicate this to the poets, for they are its (the painted picture's) men, its heroes, and its people of consequence. I do not ask them more reward for it than (the reward) to see in their social and literary life: *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Al-Manfalūḡī 1983: 4).

He also includes a detailed description of all of the main characters (10 in all) which helps the reader to understand the roles they would play in all the various stages of the story (see Jabbūr 1983: 7-20). What is noticeable about his style in this story is that it is relatively easier than in any of his others. He refrains from repeating sentences with the same meaning and chooses easy words (compared to his choice of words which are at times obscure and ancient, and which are not in use any more). Everything about the story was near and dear to his heart: the author was a poet, the main characters were poets or loved poetry, the topics were poetry and literature, and the main theme was about virtue and high morals.

In summary, the story is about a fine, young French girl, called Roxanne, who loved poetry and literature. She was from a noble, wealthy family, and many noble men and army generals were infatuated with her. Her cousin, Cyrano de Bergerac, was also in love with her, but due to a deformed appearance, namely an unusually large nose, he never declared his love for her. Cyrano had a friend, called Christian, in the same army division. Christian was attractive, but slow-witted, unintelligent, not good with words, and had no taste for beauty and art. Roxanne was attracted by Christian's good looks and tried to win his love. She confided in her cousin, Cyrano, who, despite the love for her which he hid deeply in his heart and which he was scared to divulge, tried to help her in her quest to win Christian's affection. He thought that in that way there would remain a relationship between him and Roxanne. Cyrano would tell Christian what to say to Roxanne and would write, on his behalf, love letters that aroused her feelings. In other words, Cyrano was using Christian's beauty to convey his emotions and feelings to the heart of his cousin, Roxanne.

It so happened that the commander of the two young men's army division was also infatuated with Roxanne. After a few incidents, their leader, out of revenge, sent both of them to the frontier where the war was raging fiercely. Cyrano continued writing love letters on Christian's behalf to Roxanne from the frontier. Christian once discovered Cyrano's teardrop on a letter and realised that his friend was also in love with Roxanne. He told Cyrano that Roxanne did not love him for his handsome body, but for his beautiful spirit that she saw in his words and love letters. He decided to inform the girl about the truth and to get out of her life. Fate would have it that he went onto the battlefield and was killed with the first volley of enemy fire. Cyrano continued to lead his troops to victory over the enemy just as the latter seemed to be winning the battle.

After the war, Cyrano met Roxanne occasionally to console her over their friend's demise. He himself was seriously injured, but Roxanne was not aware of it. When the injury worsened and he was nearing his end, Cyrano asked to read the last letter that Christian had sent to her. When she heard the words and expressions, she realised that they were the same as those that were uttered to her by Christian more than fifteen years ago and afterwards in different places. It then dawned upon her that the words in all those letters were Cyrano's and that it was his beautiful spirit she was in love with. Cyrano breathed his last and died in his cousin's arms. She embraced his dead body and begged him for forgiveness, crying, "How wretched I am! In my life I have loved one person and have lost him twice!" (Al-Manfalūṭī 1983: 21-350).

It was a story about the most precious and noblest of human attributes, namely sacrifice. The young man Cyrano, a soldier and poet, made one of the most wonderful

sacrifices for his beloved, the daughter of his uncle. He helped her in the love that she had chosen, so that she could be happy and satisfied. This love dominated all aspects of his life, and the rare and precious sacrifice he had made for the sake of this love, exhausted his energies. Eventually the girl would discover that what she had actually loved were the talents of her cousin. At that moment the wide, vast horizons of the gigantic sacrifice which her cousin had offered her, opened in front of her, but then it was too late. She discovered her ignorance, and realized what was hidden from her sight, far away, in the depths of her great knight and noble poet.

### 6.7 *Al-Faḍīla* (Moral Excellence)

Al-Manfalūḡī took this story from the *qiṣṣa Paul et Virginie* by the famous French writer Bernardin de St. Pierre (b. 1727). It was published in 1787 and was regarded as so great and popular that De St. Pierre was awarded a medal of honour by emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (ḡarād 2003: 602). Al-Manfalūḡī 'Arabized' it by using two translations, the one by Muḡammad 'Uthmān Jalāl and the other one by Faraḡ Anḡūn (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 63). Maybe it was Maḡmūd Khayrāt al-Muḡāmī who translated it from the original for al-Manfalūḡī (Al-Jābī I/2002: 8). The story was published in 1923 and was al-Manfalūḡī's last literary work.

As with most of his stories, he wrote a dedication. This one was dedicated to the young girls and boys of Egypt. He wrote:

What impresses me about a male youth is his bravery and boldness, and about a female youth is her behaviour and modesty, because the bravery of a young man is the foundation of all of his behaviour and manners, and the modesty of a young lady is her one and only beauty. So I dedicate this narrative to the young females and males of Egypt, so that both groups can benefit from the trait which I would love to see in them, and so that they can build their future life on the principle of *fāḍīla* (virtue) as did Paul and Virginia (Al-Manfalūḡī 1997: 9).

As with *Magdalene*, the original story fascinated al-Manfalūḡī because its events took place in the countryside and village environment similar to that where he grew up, and because its characters personified the virtues of goodness, truth, and beauty. He even wrote a *qaṣīda* about the two main characters at the end of the story by the same title 'Paul and Virginia'. It can be found in ḡarād (1997: 170-1).

With its original author the book excelled with nature, and with al-Manfalūḡī it excelled in virtue, because the heroine preferred death to life, and did not accept committing



a deed which contradicted high morals, even in a moment when committing that deed is legal and natural. During the narration al-Manfalūḡ spread, like he did in most of his translations, his nationalist, social and moral ideas and opinions (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 63-64). In the 1997 edition Majid ḡarād includes a short biography, written by Maḡmūd Khairat, of Bernardin de St. Pierre (pages 11-17).

According to Bernardin de St. Pierre, the story is based on real events (ḡarād 1997: 6). The author visited the island of Mauritius with its breath-taking natural beauty as part of his military duties, and happened to stumble on a ruined hut. He was captivated by this scene and reflected on it. An old man informed him that this hut belonged to two French *mesdames*, Margaret and Helen. The former was the lover of a man from the nobility class in France who made her pregnant and she travelled to Mauritius to hide her shameful deed. There she gave birth to a boy and named him Paul. She repented for her sin and led the rest of her life a virtuous woman. Helen was a woman from a noble family who did not approve of her marriage to a man from a poor family. She and the man escaped to Mauritius. Not long afterwards, the man passed away and Helen gave birth to their daughter, naming her Virginia.

The two ladies were friends and lived together in the same hut, weaving and working in the fields as was the custom in Mauritius. They raised the two children to love virtue and the doing of good until they were teenagers. Virginia's mother, Helen, received a letter from her elderly, noble, wealthy aunt informing her to return to France because she had decided to bequeath all her wealth to her niece, Virginia. The latter refused to leave because she and Paul were in love. The town's mayor and the family priest would eventually persuade Virginia to go to France, and after three days she departed on the earliest available ship.

Three years had passed and Paul heard no news from his girlfriend. He learned to read and write, and worked towards sailing to France where he could find work as a servant and to meet up with his beloved who promised him that she would return to him no matter how long it took. However, a letter from Virginia was received, informing her mother that she was on her way back to Mauritius because her aunt threw her out of her castle as she refused to marry a rich man they had chosen for her. As the ship was approaching the Mauritian coast, she was prevented from docking due to a fierce storm that was blowing on the island. Virginia was able to send a message, stating that she was on board the ship and that they would meet the next day, with a sailor. During the night, however, the storm became fiercer; the boat was thrown against huge boulders and destroyed. People on the shore witnessed everything. Paul tried in vain to reach his beloved who was returning to him. Just before the boat sank, a sailor tried to save Virginia, asking her to take off her dress so that he could carry her on his back to the shore. She refused to be carried naked on his body. A massive

wave hit the boat and threw the sailor into the ocean. Everyone on board drowned.

Paul went literally mad with sadness and grief. He spent the next few days lost in thought, wandering around aimlessly, lonely and sad, until he came to Virginia's grave after eight days and committed suicide in order to join his most beloved in heaven. After less than a month, the two mothers also passed away to join their two children. That hut remained without inhabitants ever since (Al-Manfalūḡī 1997: 19-169).

## 6.8 Al-Manfalūḡī's Poetry

To give a full picture of al-Manfalūḡī and his literary works, one must mention that he also has a large collection of poems to his credit. Most of them were first published in newspapers and magazines. He started his writing career with a collection of *qaḡā'id* "and some of it was very good poetry, but his prose later won the admiration of literary circles, especially when he abandoned poetry for prose" (Jabbūr 1983: xiii). The majority of the poems belonged to the category of "...romanticism which he wrote at the beginning of his writing career (and) part of it was published by Aḡmad 'Abīd in his book *Mashāhir Shu'arā' al-'Aḡr* (Famous Contemporary Poets)" (ḡarād 2003: 8). The book by Bassām 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jābī contains a selection of his poetry which is, according to al-Jābī, "a few (poems) of many, and a drop in the large ocean" (2002: I/56). But like Qāsim says: "His poetic inclinations came forth in his inimitable prosaic style" (2001: 28).

Returning to his greatest asset as a writer, namely his style, we notice that he he did not address the reader with the tongue only or used embellished sentences or dry words; on the contrary, his discourse came from the heart and the words touched the heart and soul of the reader, for he did not use words unnecessarily – only those that brought out his required meaning – and he did not look for word meanings other than what he intended. His words were very natural and he chose them in such a way as to be suitable and effective. This was the secret of his writing and distinguishing style: he used his natural aptitude and disposition (ḡaba') and artistic skill to imitate (ḡana') together. As far as his sentences and expressions were concerned, his formula was to describe and to make crystal clear, and by mixing reality and imagination. Combining this with an appeal to the emotions in a melancholy, pensive and somber tone, we can understand why the youth responded and accepted his writings enthusiastically and why young and old read his stories with wonder and awe, and wanted to imitate his style.

The stories discussed above illustrate his Romantic leanings and his preoccupation with the suffering of the weak and wretched, and show why he could elicit the empathy of his

readers. The trait which distinguishes him the most from previous short story writers and his contemporaries was his sad, grievous and painful leanings because not one of his stories has a happy ending; on the contrary, every story ends with the death of its main characters – sometimes even four people die at once as can be seen in some of his translations. The possible reason for that were the prevailing ‘tragic-romantic’ leanings of that period or his personal sad and melancholy nature. He himself said that he views life as the abode of the wretched and suffering, the place of pain and sadness, and the best and sincerest people to talk about them are the suffering and the wretched (Būqarī 1979: 85). They also show how he spread his social, economic and political ideas and opinions in his stories. These ideas and opinions will be discussed in more detail in the succeeding chapter.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī's Ideas and Opinions**

As was seen in the previous chapter, al-Manfalūṭī could skillfully use his stories and essays to spread his opinions and ideas on mainly social issues. The affairs he wrote about reflected the concerns of the writers of that period in the history of Egypt. Some of these ideas are, of course, applicable to other societies and relevant to modern times too. The focus will be on the most important and relevant issues.

Although some information was taken from al-Manfalūṭī's views and opinions that he interspersed in his *qiṣa* and other *maqālāt*, most of which appear in this section is based on *al-Naḥārāt* because it is the main source of his ideas and opinions.

#### 7.1 Al-Manfalūṭī and Politics

His politics was the politics of any citizen with ecstatic devotion for his / her country, who shed tears of sadness for the wretchedness which had befallen it and who despaired for its future. Concerning this issue he said, "Had I known that life in Egypt could only be perfect by the loss of my life, then the quest for death would have been more desirable and tastier to me than the quest for life" (quoted in al-Jābī I/2002: 53).

Politically, he did not belong to a specific party or a newspaper to which he was zealously devoted. It can be recalled that in those days, politics and newspapers were inseparable. The one influenced the other (refer to chapters 2 and 3).

During the time which al-Manfalūṭī wrote (the last quarter of the nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth centuries), the main political parties were:

1. The National Party which was established by Muḥammad Kāmil and which strove to inculcate a feeling of Egyptian nationalism through confrontation, incitement and agitation.
2. The Party of the Nation which was led by Sa`ad Zaghlūl, and which stood for collaboration and negotiating a truce with the English. It changed its name in 1919 to 'The *Wafd* Party'.
3. The Reform Party that was led by *Shaikh* `Alī Yūsuf. The party was based on the principles of the constitution. It represented the middle road between the other two parties in its approach. However, it did not spare any effort in fighting the English with arguments, debates and discussions, and with articles in the newspapers (Al-Jābī I/2002: 19).

Al-Manfalūḥī felt that the proliferation of political parties was harmful for the welfare of the country. The nation must have only one party because the least political hatred and resentment that existed among the individuals of the nation would disparage and degrade its independence.

He divided newspapers, which were profusely used to spread political views and stances by all political parties, especially after independence, into two types: The first paper went to great lengths to satisfy its readers by simply reporting all affairs in society, whether beneficial or harmful. This type of paper, he felt, was exploiting people's intellect and feelings in order to make business. The second one was harsh in its criticism of society and the nation consequently did not benefit from it as it should. He felt that the nation was in dire need of a leader who was totally sincere in his or her deeds and who was endowed with wisdom in his or her sayings. There was no special relationship between him and any specific newspaper, not even the one he wrote his essays for. His relationship with the newspaper was nothing more than that of any journalist who writes for a newspaper. He had the complete freedom of having his opinions and ideas published in any paper he wished. If there were any correspondence between his and the paper's principles and policies, then it was coincidental. If they differed from those of the paper, then he did it voluntarily and out of conviction (Al-Jābī 2002: I/53-54). About his political leanings, Qāsim remarks, "As for al-Manfalūḥī, he was a follower of *Imām* `Abduh, a supporter of Sa`d Zaghlūl Pasha, and, by extension, a member of The Party of the Nation" (2001: 9).

## 7.2 His Understanding of Social Justice

He was of the opinion that wealth was the result of the assault of the strong on the weak, and that wealth was therefore one of the most obvious manifestations of social oppression. In the essay *al-Ghanī wa al-Faqīr* he said:

The greed and selfishness of the strong become obvious when no rain falls from the sky and when the earth does not produce any plants. They claim whatever water and food there are for themselves. The result is that the poor become destitute, oppressed and miserable. The indulgent rich, and not the earth or the sky, are thus responsible for the misery of the poor (Al-Manfalūḡī 2002: I/214).

In *‘Alā Lisān ‘Āmil Faqīr* he wrote about the employer who exploited the employee, an idea which perhaps no Arab writer had thought of before.

## 7.3 His Opinion about Western Civilization

Al-Manfalūḡī expressed his point of view about Western civilization in his ‘Introduction’ to *al-Naḡarāt* where he said:

I was able to – and how the hearts are pervaded by this Western civilization – ponder about it. I looked at it from a high observation post, and I knew that the weakest way was that a person should look at the issue in a hasty and foolish way, that is, that he either has to take all of it or leave all of it. I saw its good and its bad, its virtues and its vices, and knew what must be taken from it and what must be left of it. It was my concern that the people must brace themselves for it, as I have braced myself for it, and to hold responsible those weak people for succumbing before its vices, shame, godlessness and immorality. (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003(b): I/25).

He found it puzzling how a person with reasonable knowledge and understanding could indulge in its (the Western civilization’s) vices and could, when an adversary confronted him / her, justify it by relying on evidence taken from this civilization “as if it was the divine law which the minds resort to when there is a difference of opinion” (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): I/25).

He was also surprised at how Arab Egyptians could feel ashamed in front of their European employees, and stupidly follow them in style of clothes and types of food. He was furthermore amazed at how a Roman youth, who indulged in the drinking of wine, could by himself / herself and individually be able to determine that which the whole Arab nation could not determine, that is, how (the youth) could bring the Arab nation down to talk to him / her in his / her language, but the nation could not raise him / her up to talk to them in their

language “and it is most necessary that he must try to satisfy it (the nation) and reach out to it rather than it (the nation) must try to satisfy and flatter him” (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): I/25).

Al-Manfalūḡī was saddened by this blind imitation of the West which was the cause that the people denied their own history, nationalism and civilization “until the history of the (Arab) East and its scientists, writers, philosophers and poets become the ugliest and most loathsome of pictures in the eyes of most Easterners, and if they are ignorant (about their history), they (even feel) proud of it” (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): I/25).

It thus seems clear that al-Manfalūḡī did not dislike Western civilization itself but disliked its lewdness and immorality, and believed that only the good and useful must be taken from it. He explained and warned that the good and the useful were mixed with a lot of evil and it is therefore vital not to be deceived when choosing. He believed that (as stated in *al-Madīna al-Gharbiyya*) “Nothing prevents the conveyance of some of Western civilization’s traditions and technical terms to us (the Muslim world), but they must be reviewed with the intention of simplifying and benefiting our sciences and widening our experiences, practices and choices, and not to imitate, plagiarise and take them as the basis for the approval or disapproval of our issues and traditions” (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): I/83).

He opined that some of the Arab scholars must Arabize and investigate Western literature, but when they Arabize, it must be beneficial, and when they investigate, it must be done in a critical way, not in a weak and submissive manner (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 67).

#### 7.4 His Opinion about Eastern Civilization

Al-Manfalūḡī was very proud of the flourishing, radiant past, and tried to revive it so that the nation could win back their true identity and original personality. He was shaken by the fact that the nation was being driven towards Western civilization’s vices and not its goodness. Therefore he urged and beseeched the Arab writers to be the group of people who could be depended on to give continuous guidance with their reflections, thoughts and opinions. He asked them to insure and protect the morals of the nation because they are a trust with them.

He considered the Egyptian nation an Eastern, Muslim nation which must, therefore, maintain its religion and ‘Easternness’. To quote from *al-Madīna al-Gharbiyya*:

Egyptians have many faults, and it was necessary to reform them. It must be done in the name of Eastern civilization and not in the name of Western civilization ...if we call (the people) to civilization, we must cite to them, for example, the civilization of Baghdad, Cordova, ... not Paris, Rome, Switzerland and New York ... and when we invite them to honour, we must read to them the verses of the revealed Books, the sayings of

the prophets and wise men of the East, not the verses of Roussouw, Bacon, Newton and Spencer ... and when we call them to war, the history of Khālīd bin Walīd, Sa`ad bin Abū Waqqās, Mūsā bin Nāṣir and Salāḥ al-Dīn is better for them than the history of Napoleon, Wellington, Washington, Nelson, ... it is disgraceful on Egyptian history that the Eastern Muslim in Egypt knows the history of Napoleon, but not that of `Amr bin al-`As ... (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): I/82).

His writings showed that he did not call for the nation to be ignorant of Western personalities or Western civilization. On the contrary, he believed that knowledge was essential, but it must not be at the cost of the nation's own thoughts, ideas, ethics, morals and civilization. Al-Manfalūḡī's tone of voice in his call was high and sharp in the context of the English colonization and its control of the nation at that time (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 68-69).

### 7.5 Al-Manfalūḡī and Religion

As previously mentioned, *Imām* Muḡammad `Abduh was highly impressed with al-Manfalūḡī and used to praise him, and felt justified that he would be of the ones who would benefit the most from his knowledge and the one who would spread his principles and teachings the most. That prophecy actually materialized because al-Manfalūḡī was pure in his belief, perfect in his behaviour, enlightened in his understanding of the religion, defending it strongly and was severely keen, but not fanatical, about it. "Some would accuse him of religious fanaticism ... but all he did was to try and cleanse the *dīn* of innovations and superstitious beliefs ... his major concern (like many other thinkers and reformers) was religious reformation and through it to liberate his country ..." (Qāsim 2001: 12).

In *al-Jāmi`a al-Islāmiyya* he categorically states his beliefs and behaviour:

Had I only known that worldly needs and aims could only be achieved by forsaking the rites of religion or by mocking its compulsory duties, I would have left them (the worldly needs and aims) and avoided them and washed my hands of them, and would have told them, as `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib had said before, 'Leave me alone, deceive other than me, I am not in need of you ...' Had I only known that nationalism – which is the best thing man can have in his heart – is an obstacle in the way to my life after death or spreads a veil between me and my Lord, I would have cast it off as I cast off my garment. Then I would have gone to one of the mountain peaks ... where in my solitariness I would listen only to the prayer of the heart or the call of Allāh, until my time had come and my life was spent" (Al-Manfalūḡī 2002: I/120).

Al-Manfalūḡī was just as steadfast in his deeds. Some tragedies befell him and he was severely tested with respect to his beloved children. When he buried his son, the fourth one whom he had laid to rest with his own hands, he raised his hands to the sky to thank and



praise God and to express his satisfaction with the will of God. He said, “To Him be praise, whether (one is) pleased or angry, to Him be thanks, whether (He) gives or takes away, and I am satisfied with whatever He has ordained, and patient in His afflictions” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 70).

He believed (and this is substantiated in *Yaum al- ʿisāb*) that in religion the external must agree with the internal, otherwise it was deception, and that bowing and prostrating in prayer would not be of any benefit unless it was reflected in sincere deeds and upright behaviour:

The weakest of means towards God is that bowing and prostrating, standing and sitting (in prayer). Should a man spend his nights praying and his days fasting, and then he oppresses a small child, by even grabbing a morsel (of bread) from his hand, then all his good deeds will turn into bad deeds, and his religious rites will not benefit him at all (Al-Manfalūḥī 2003 (b): I/86).

In order that people did not have the wrong understanding – as some people mostly had – of the concept of the dependence, mercy and forgiveness of God when they commit sins, al-Manfalūḥī warned that intercession on the Day of Judgement is one of the manifestations of honour and respect. God chooses with honour and respect those who draw close to Him, but He (to quote again from *Yaum al- ʿisāb*) “does not grant intercession to anyone unless there is an accompanying deed more sincere than one of his soul’s deeds which necessitated his being soft with mercy on others, those who had sinned and those who were disobedient. God is too sublime to be mocked at and (He is) above favouritism” (Al-Manfalūḥī 2003 (b): I/85).

In an article on *Jurjī Zaidān* with the same title, he made an interesting remark about religion that is exclusively for God and which is free from blind fanaticism and dark envy:

The major difference between a pure *dīn* and a tarnished *dīn* is that the former widens his chest for everything, even for his transgressors and adversaries, and the latter constricts his chest for everything, even for himself. God is too wide in His mercy and too wise to close all ways to reach Him in the faces of His slaves, except the way of the sword and the fire. This lowly hatred which inflames the people’s hearts do not strengthen the religion in itself, but rather strengthens the religious leaders who use it (religion), profit from it and trade with it in the markets of stupidity and ignorance. Those who make hatred holy, and bless it and regard it as part and parcel of religion’s essence, say without any understanding, ‘The godlessness together with the religious chaos in the world, and the worship of the sun, moon, sand and stone are more beneficial for the human society, and it is better to return to them than to the worship of God (Al-Manfalūḥī 2003 (b): III/317).

In this *maqāla*, he also showed how these people rely on and take the *dīn* as a means

to invalidate blood or sacrosanctity, claiming that they are defending and protecting the sanctity of the *dīn*, and in doing so they ascribe lies to God, knowingly or unknowingly.

Abū al-Anwār quotes Dr. `Umar Farūkh's description of al-Manfalūḡī: "Al-Manfalūḡī was a strong upholder of *Islām*. It (*Islām*) penetrated his deep inner self, and was not mixed with superstition. He undoubtedly took this from his teacher, *Imām Shaikh Muḡammad `Abduh*" (2000: 71). Like *Shaikh `Abduh*, he was in no doubt that *Islām* must form the foundation of the welfare and progress of Egyptian society (Qāsim 2001: 28).

He was not a rigid person who only quoted to prevent man from leading a normal life. On the contrary, when he called on people to hold on to their *dīn*, he wanted them to do so with understanding and consciousness, without rigidity or superficiality. As proof of this, one finds in one of his *maqālāt (al-Bayān)* that he blames the religious leaders for their extremism and obstinacy. He said,

The learned *Imāms* are still extreme and obstinate in it (religion). They cut rocks from the hills of *Shimā`* ..., putting them as obstacles in the way of civilization, until they make them become a heavy burden on the people's shoulders. Consequently, many of the people get bored and fed up with it (religion), and begin to demand a good way of life in a wrong way. If they can only yield with it with the passing of time, and obey its instructions and prohibitions according to the social issues and conditions, then they will be able to strike a balance between the demands of life and the demands of religion" (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): III/269).

In his article *Islam and Christianity* (see ḡarād 2003 (b): I/105-11) – an actual rebuttle of Lord Cromer's disparaging and biased opinions about *Islām* – he attacked Christian missionaries for their derogatory remarks about *Islām*. They claim that the Prophet's *Qur'ān* is ungrammatical, thereby denigrating *Islām* absurdly. They conveniently forget that Arabic grammar was codified by reference to the *Qur'ān* and not vice versa. Giving proofs, he observes that the glories of Western civilization are the fruit of an earlier *Islām* whilst the current ruin of *Islām* is the result of the deprivations of Christianity. All humankind ultimately gained from the inspiration of *Islām* and, for example, the concepts of the equality of man grew and developed in the West.

He asked the Muslims (in *al-Jāmi'a al-Islāmiyya*) to reject the wrong opinion that limits the *dīn* between the walls of mosques, saying "I have not seen a weaker, a more unsubstantiated and a more misguided opinion than the one which says 'the religion is not allowed to go beyond the steps of the mosque ....' How can a Muslim practice his *dīn* as an individual in any country while he is self-centred and selfish?" (Al-Manfalūḡī 2002: I/123).

## 7.6 His Opinions about Education

Al-Manfalūḡī addressed the growing children by saying: “A pure soul, a calm heart and a noble conscience are enough for your happiness” and “A student without etiquette is like a bare tree – it does not bear leaves nor fruit, it obstructs people in their meeting places, hinders the wind, blocks the traveller’s way, and people do not seek its shelter and cannot escape its evil” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 72).

He was deeply concerned about maintaining high moral standards, especially in the young students because they were the symbol of the nation’s glory and the ocean of its hopes and aspirations. He advised the youth to avoid watching and not to be attracted by, plays and actors who did not care about good morals and virtues. That was about two years after the First World War. Al-Manfalūḡī, in a long *maqāla* by the name of *al-Malā`ib al-Hazaliyya* [The Comedy Theatres] (see ḡarād 2003 (b): III/285-89), forcefully advised students about, and gave them insight into, the successful way to education. He requested them to rise above trivialities and to focus on plays and actors with high standards of morality and virtues, for example the plays of George Abyaḡ and `Abd al-Raḡmān Rushdī.

In the same vein, he urged the learner in *al-Kalimāt* to remain loyal and devoted to his family, saying:

Maybe your father or your mother or someone entrusted to care for you did not have the education that you are lucky to have. You must never attribute that to stupidity, or make fun of them or use it against them, for if you do, then you have lost double in manners what you have gained in knowledge ... (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): III/379).

Al-Manfalūḡī addressed the growing child in a special *maqāla*, giving him / her a lot of sound advice. The most important was that the child must learn to rely on his / her self and not on inherited wealth. The latter in most cases leads to the destruction of the individual. He prized experimentation and practical experience because through them the child builds his / her true character and personality. He explained to the youth that extremists are wretched and perverted. Therefore, he personally did not wish his offspring to grow up rich. He feared wealth more than poverty for his child, because wealth can pull him / her towards stupidity and ignorance and to despise knowledge. He cautioned fathers about leaving their small children in the hands of servants and their bigger ones in the care of evil-doers.

Lastly, al-Manfalūḡī requested the growing child to learn from ‘the school of life’ if the opportunity to learn in an official school had passed him by. They must not be students of ‘professions’. He blames the father, the teacher and the society because they guide the child in the wrong way, that is, they glorify a certificate or a profession in the eyes of the child and

not knowledge itself (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 72-74).

### 7.7 Al-Manfalūḡī and the Arts

He was very fond of the musical and theatrical arts because of his love of beauty and poetry. He said, “I visited that theatre (meaning the Arabic Acting Theatre) last night, and I visit it very often, because I love plays almost as much as I love poetry, music and beauty” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 74).

As already mentioned, al-Manfalūḡī participated in the revision and correction of the play *al-Shā`ir* when his friend, Muḡammad `Abd al-Salām al-Jundī, translated it for an acting group which wanted to perform it. In this way he came to know about the story, *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand, and would rewrite it in his customary style.

He was highly impressed with the higher arts which guided people towards virtue and which protected virtue and excellent morals. Furthermore, he was very concerned about raising the populace’s level of artistic taste. He approved of them attending acting houses and theatres, but blamed them for liking plays in which there was a lot of loud noise and despised listening to, for example, good poetry and classical music in plays.

In his *maqāla* titled *al-Malā`ib al-Hazaliyya*, mentioned above, he unleashed his pen against the acting groups who did not care for general morals and sacred traditions.

His profound understanding and perception of art can be pinpointed in the article *al-Ghinā al-`Arabi* (Arabic Music) when he said,

Music is the feelings and emotions which remain in the self when the tongue cannot express it, so the tune brings the feelings forth. (Music) is the most eloquent of orators; (it is) the most expansive in clarity, penetrates the heart, and is the quickest to mix with the soul, to take control of the mind and to be the meeting place of hearts ... Music is one of the natural arts, nations being guided to it by their natural disposition (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): II/183-84).

Then al-Manfalūḡī attacked some vulgar forms of music found in Arabic, and requested the musicians to return to the Arabic music of the former periods so that the language could be guaranteed and insured (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 74-75).

### 7.8 Al-Manfalūḡī and Peace

At the dawn of the New Year, al-Manfalūḡī said, “There is no happiness in life if peace does not spread its white wings over this human society, and peace will never spread

unless the desires of the self are satisfied and equality and justice are established” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 75).

In his *maqāla*, *Ayna al-Faḍīla* (What Happened to Virtue?), he mockingly said,

I think that the worst enemy of man is man himself ... every nation has made preparations in its storehouses and warehouses with the equipment and tools of death (that is, ammunition and armoury for war) ... until a dispute over one of the borders befalls them, then man dresses in the fur of a wild predator and takes this equipment and tools, like the beast would take its sharp claws, ... to attack the son of his father and mother .... When you ask two fighting soldiers: ‘What is your problem? And why are you fighting? And when did this argument between you start? I have observed closely that you two did not get to know each other except the hour in which you have been fighting’, then you will know that they had been betrayed and that they had not left their homes, except to put a pearl in the king’s crown or a medal on the army general (Al-Manfalūḥī 2003 (b): I/44).

These texts are strong evidence about his belief in, and love for, peace. Other articles, too, bear out his love for peace, security and freedom. He was the only one at that time to take an affirmative and an active, positive stand to express his protest against and disgust with the world war when he refused to raise his pen to write anymore. He said forcefully in the introduction to his *maqāla*, *al-Malā’ib al-Hazaliyya*, that he had promised himself not to write anymore until the war was ended and the pen had become free: “May God make war repulsive! And may He make repulsive everything it wrought!” (Al-Manfalūḥī 2003 (b): III/285).

This same revulsion for war is found in one of his short stories *al-’Iqāb* (The Obstacles). He ridiculed the war leaders and politicians who made war for personal glory and position in *Khidā’ al-’Anāwīn*:

Many a soul between the prison walls is more pure in heart than the hearts between palace walls, and many a woman who is an outcast from human society is driven by a fate, from which she cannot escape, to stand between the pillars of a guillotine, whereas (this fate) was more deserved for the usurer... or the leader who spills the blood of thousands for no other reason than to achieve artificial greatness ... or the politician who schemes to rule a weak nation which is secure and happy in its existence ... then he strips them of their most precious possessions of freedom and independence (Al-Manfalūḥī 2003 (b): II/175).

It is no surprise that al-Manfalūḥī was a lover of peace, a believer in it and an inviter to it, for he was a man with lofty, human sensitivities. In *al-Insāniyya al-’Āmma* he reiterates his belief that

...the University of Humanity was the nearest university to the heart of man and more attached to his heart and soul, because it cries for the afflicted whom it does not even know.... Nationalism and religious zeal, even being fanatical about them and defending them, are acceptable as long as they are for the cause of humanity ... (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): II/232).

## 7.9 Al-Manfalūḡī and the Female Sex

Al-Manfalūḡī was very respectful towards women. He believed in her, was affectionate towards her, defended her, strove in her cause, and cried for her sake. What a lofty place he gave her when he quips in *Iḡtirām al-Mar'a*:

Life is joy and sadness. As for its joy, we are indebted to woman for it because she is the origin of it and the spring from which it gushes forth. As for its sadness, woman is able to change sadness into joy or to at least relieve it from the one who is sad. It is as if we are indebted to woman with all our life (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): III/319).

He stripped manhood from a man if he did not have a wife at his side who can revive the spirit of bravery and ambition in his soul. He said,

A man cannot be a man unless he has a wife next to him who can revive the spirit of bravery and ambition in his soul, and who can implant the pride and greatness of responsibility in his heart .... Nothing exhorts a man more with effort in his deeds and uprightness in his worldly affairs, or with serious behaviour in his journey (through life) ... or urges him in the way of adventure, risks, devotion and perseverance than the profuse tears of a wife and her imploring hand! (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): III/319).

He also behaved with affection towards her, whether as a girl, a mother or a sister, in the same spirit and manner as mentioned above, or maybe even more. He kindled a very important issue concerning woman, namely

Have we rewarded her for that which she had given, and is still giving, us?! The answer is 'no' because if we grant her any feeling from our hearts then we do not give her more than the feelings of love and affection, and we withhold the feelings of respect and reverence, while she is actually more in need of being given respect and reverence than showering her with love and affection ... We have mercy on her as a master would have mercy on a slave ... we entrust her to raise our children or to be a servant or a nurse, and we use her to satisfy our sexual drives. We take her as a companion ... but we do not render to her sustenance and we do not grant her clothes except that which reflects a pleased and happy view in the mirror of ourselves (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): III/320).

He feels that in this way we actually oppress her because she was created for her own sake first and not for man's sake. Consequently, we must relieve her, even if only a little, from the confinement of her prison so that she can breathe the breeze of freedom, and thereby revive her spirit which was subdued by imprisonment and confinement. "It is essential that she be respected so that she can become used to respecting herself, for he who respects himself is least prone to commit errors" (Al-Manfalūqī 2003 (b): III/320).

Al-Manfalūqī hated that a woman must be the slave of man. He did not want her to "slip off her clothes, spend her nights, and wander aimlessly in men's societies and clubs, and to remove the protective *ijāb*" (Al-Manfalūqī 2003 (b): III/320).

His concern about women did not stop at treating her problems, but he also embarked boldly on the risks and hazards which had more serious and influential consequences for her life, namely the dangers of prostitution. He defended them and called for the provision of a decent life for them. He requested the society to take her by the hand because she is like a train whose wheels had slipped from the tracks – it must be restored so that it does not derail all the carriages, and so that it can be saved from the dire consequences awaiting it. By the revival of the woman, the whole society is revived.

Abū al-Anwār quotes al-Manfalūqī when he remarked, "Have mercy on the fallen woman (harlot). Do not beautify her needs, do not buy her honour from her, then maybe she will be unable to find a haggler who haggles with her and she will return honourably and safely to the nook of her house" (2000: 79).

The topic of marriage he covered in *al-Iṣān fī al-Zawāj*. He urged "the good men to search for the poor amongst the women and to marry them, and to marry them to their sons and relatives, even if they were not beautiful or of noble lineage, because that will be a good deed, and a good deed is not rewarded until it reaches its place of hardship or misery" (Al-Manfalūqī 2003 (b): III/122).

Al-Manfalūqī continued and actually blamed man for the crime of prostitution, saying

Prostitution is a misery to the prostitute. None but man heaps it on her. It is, therefore, only right that he pays for what he has ruined and to repair what he has spoiled ... after deceiving and using her, he throws her aside, washing his hands off her ... and there you see her in the nook of her house, not knowing what to do – if she wants to live a married life, she cannot find someone to marry, if she wants to work, she cannot do anything well ... if she begs, no one gives her. It is for a man to choose between giving her a large sum of money unlawfully and giving her one dirham lawfully. If he opts for the latter, she will not find it necessary to live by prostitution .... We still think that man is woman's debtor, and that it is his duty to settle his debt, and to pay blood money for the crime that he had committed. If man refuses to marry the prostitute, then he must make prostitution impossible, and he can only do that if he regards marriage to her as one of the components of *iḥsān*

(goodness), that is, if he marries her more for herself than for his self. The most deserving women of *iḥsān* are those whom God did not grant beauty, wealth, noble lineage and a means of income. If man only wants to marry the happy (woman), then he must remember that he is the one who took the miserable one by the hand and steered her to the place of misery, and threw her with his hands into the abyss of sin and immorality (Al-Manfalūḡī 2003 (b): III/122-3).

He spent all his energy in defence of woman and fighting for man to grant her her dignity and honour. He was true in his feelings, sincere with his tears and apposite in his views.

However, al-Manfalūḡī changed into woman's enemy when virtue and chastity had been made easy for her, but she still resorts to disobedience and vice. He thus pardons her when appropriate, but when she turns to vice without due cause, he becomes her enemy. Some critics hold that al-Manfalūḡī was contradictory in his stand about woman for he sometimes defended her and sometimes he attacked her. This, of course, is incorrect for the reasons outlined above.

Al-Manfalūḡī displayed Romantic leanings in some of his *qiṣṣa* (he, for example, rewrote the story of Alexander Dumas Lapin 'Lady Camilla' which treats the issue of woman) and agrees with most Romantic writers that "woman is an angel who descended from heaven, cleaning our hearts with love, ascending with our emotions, setting our feelings alight, and encouraging us to rise up with the burdens of our duties ..." (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 80-81).

Although al-Manfalūḡī was influenced by Romanticism, he did not allow it to clash with the tenets and spirit of the Islamic religion when he wrote on these issues. Abū al-Anwār quotes what an unnamed English orientalist said about al-Manfalūḡī in this regard, "As for his appeals for respecting woman and the poor of society, they were based on the principles of the *dīn* ..." (2000: 81).

No wonder then that al-Manfalūḡī's writings penetrated the "*khudūr* (women's quarters) of the Arab society and achieved the attention of Arab women that no other Arab writer's compositions could" and prompted an Arab authoress like Mārī Yanī to exclaim: "How I felt the day I read his book! – it was as if my soul was plucked out of my body, and that which passed in front my eyes was the conspicuous truth with which hearts are pulverized, emotions are intrigued and filled with hopes, and (with which) youthfulness appeared! ..." (Quoted in Jabbūr 1983: xxii-xxiii).

#### 7.10 The relevance of al-Manfalūḡī's writings



One can deduce from al-Manfalūḡī's writings, and more specifically his ideas and opinions, that he wrote on issues and problems that are found in all nations and at all times. This gives his writings a flavour of immortality and makes them relevant and applicable to all times.

A word on this relevance of al-Manfalūḡī's works, especially *al-Naḡarāt*, may be appropriate in today's life. Many of our contemporary communities still need to listen to this voice. The issues and aspects of life he wrote about were true and relevant for his time, still apply to today, and will be pertinent until the end of time.

As far as the Arabs see some of their situations in the Middle East reflected in al-Manfalūḡī's writings, Bassām `Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jābī has this to say:

In *Khuḡba al-Ḥarb* (Sermon of War) al-Manfalūḡī is almost alive amongst us. The American and Israeli and their followers' vainglory and arrogance and the real oppression of the Palestinians and Arabs can be seen. If one replaces the word *Burqa* (a city) with the word 'Palestine' or 'Tripoli' or *al-Quds*, then his words become alive in our time, and fits exactly what is really happening in our (Arab) nation today. Refer also to (his essay) *Wa Irḡamtah* (Have Mercy on Him).

In fact, there is some *al-Naḡarāt* that we can apply to actual contemporary international politics. As an example, we can replace part of *al-Adab al-Kathīb* (Fraudulent Literature) with international democracy and apply its contents to America. When we do that we will find that the correspondence is perfect. The rest of this essay deals with the psychology of mankind which is applicable to all times and places.

We can do the same with most of his writings, because he always wrote of human suffering and feelings, and these sufferings and feelings do not differ from time to time. So al-Manfalūḡī's *al-Naḡarāt* is still alive, pulsating with movement and boisterous with energy.

The same can be said concerning his writings about literature and rhetoric. His words are still fresh and alive. He attacks the evil and shortcomings of the comedy plays in theatres, and what he attacks can be valid for what is known and popular today in the cinemas and theatres in most countries, Arab and non-Arab. In fact, they are relevant to today's television programmes. What al-Manfalūḡī mentions about the abuses and insults of 'Um Shula' can be readily applied to the abuses and insults which television programmes fix into the minds of the general public ...

Read the essay *Ayna al-Faḡīla?* in which he talks about the merchants, the judges, the wealthy, the politicians, and the men of religion.

Also the issue concerning the essay *al-Idq wa al-Kathīb* (Truth and Lying) where he talks about dubious men, wives and some poets. If you read *Al-Madaniyya al-Gharbiyya* (Western Civilization), you will see it applies perfectly to our times ...

Compare his stance in *Ghurfa al-Aḡzān* (The Room of Grief) and *al-Ḥubb wa al-Zawāj* (Love and Marriage), concerning 'woman' and 'love'. You will find that he ... distinguishes between the fallen woman who slipped once and then repents and returns to her senses, and the sinful female who never stops. Of course, he does not forget to stand by woman when it is necessary, in order to lift

oppression and injustice from her, for example in *al-Bā'isāt* ( The Wretched Women) and in *al-Rajul wa al-Mar'a* (Man and Woman) ... There you will find why he accuses man of being an oppressor and throwing his weight around as far as woman is concerned ... (The same relevance) you will find in his dealing with teaching and learning methodology, for example the essays *al-Bayān* and *Zayd wa 'Amru* (Zayd and Amr) ... (2002: 15-18).

Anyone sympathetic to the Arab cause will understand the depth of Arab feeling and appreciate why they relate to al-Manfalūḡī's writings: some of his writings are as true now on the twin themes of Zionism and Imperialism as it was on the British occupation during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## **Chapter 8**

### **An Appraisal of Muḡḡafā Luḡfī al-Manfalūḡī's Literary Works**

Like every human being, a writer has his / her good points and his / her bad points, and like any famous person, his / her supporters and detractors. Therefore both sides of the writer will be assessed and a defense will be put up for the 'negative aspects' of his works.

Muḡḡafā Luḡfī al-Manfalūḡī was firstly, in the world of literature during his time, a noteworthy and phenomenal personality and, secondly, a figure worthy of honour and admiration, because he lived during a time when the writing styles were still not free from the remains of imitation and fabrication. The awakening and recovery from that direction, namely imitation and fabrication, was represented in the poem of Aḡmad Shauqī *Fī Aswāq al-Thahab* (In the Gold Markets) and Bakrī's *Ṣahārij al-Lu'lu'* (The Tanks of Pearls), but in the case of al-Manfalūḡī's style it was, as described by professor Ṣalāḡ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr, "a far reaching step in development, which indicated the richness of al-Manfalūḡī's self and his voluntary efforts for renewal. This style differed dramatically from the *maqāma* style of Muḡammad al-Muwaylaḡī in *ḡadīth Isā ibn Hishām* and even ḡāfī Ibrāhīm's *Layālī Satīḡ* ' (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 83).

The following major writers' and literary critics' viewpoints about al-Manfalūḡī were already noted in the introduction : Dr. Muḡammad Abū al-Anwār, Dr. Aḡmad Haikal, Prof. Aḡmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt, Sheikh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Bashārī, Ṭāhā Ḥusain, Prof. al-Aqqād, Brockelmann and H.A.R.Gibb. They were all constructive, favorable comments which emphasized the great stature and place al-Manfalūḡī occupies in modern Arabic literature. Many other prominent literary personalities also assessed and gave their carefully weighed opinions about him and his works.

A contemporary scholar of al-Manfalūḥī, Aḥmad Luḥfī Sayyid, said about him: “The best with *bayān* (eloquent and clear speech) amongst us is Sayyid Muḥḥafā Luḥfī al-Manfalūḥī. I almost do not find anyone amongst our writers who is equal to him in style ... he excels in giving words a kind of speciality which expresses exactly the meaning he wants to convey and which almost have no other meaning. He deals with difficult topics and makes them so easy and clear to the reader that the reader thinks they are his own compositions, while (of course) they were not” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 83).

Al-Jābī quotes Aḥmad ḥafī `Awa’s description of al-Manfalūḥī’s writing style:

There is seldom found someone who can satisfy the specialist (public) with his pen and (simultaneously) satisfy the general (public) with his eloquent rhetoric and clarity. If he is too elevated (in his style), he obscures his point to the general (man), and if he relegates (his style), his pen angers the specialist. As for (al-Manfalūḥī), he is in my opinion the rare writer who preserved and maintained his eloquent style in all his affairs and under all circumstances ... it shows that the Arabic disposition was one of his talents, not one of his flaws. He is also the only writer who could strike a fine balance between the understanding of his meaning and his aims ... that indicates that he writes with his heart and not with his pen, and that he addresses the heart and not the pages and lines (2002: I/55).

Al-Manfalūḥī is considered in modern Arabic literature as the apogee of the movement towards pure Arabic prose and its liberation from the shackles of fabrication, imitation and weakness. He released himself from every kind of chain that was so characteristic of his predecessors and contemporaries. He himself said that he was highly impressed with the Arabic style during the ‘golden age’ of Arabic literature, critical of the decline of the language and the style of that period which was suffering from the ‘disease’ of fabrication. He considered all of the styles just words of the tongue, and therefore false and invalid, because the styles depended on flowery rhetoric and embellished expression, embellished sentences, or dry, rigid words. He took an interest in a type of style of which the salient feature was ‘speech from the heart’, that is, in his own words “prose or poetry which, when you listen to it, you feel as if its composer is at your side, speaking to you like a person talking to his companion ... until you see the veil of the words become thin in front of you ... it is the most superior and noble speech – and this (to be eloquent and clear) should be the intention of all writers, no matter how they differ in rhetorical expression and style” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 84).

In the introduction to *al-Naḥārāt* he explains his writing style, saying, “In speech, I did not care about words of the tongue or speech of the mind, that is, I only used necessary words and words with intrinsic meaning” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 84)

The efforts of people like Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Imām Muḥammad `Abduh to rid Arabic of its weaknesses and chains of *saj`* and *badī`* crystallized in the writing style of al-Manfalūḥī. He was like the link that completed the chain of these attempts and efforts, and is thus considered as a rare and precious phenomenon of his time. If one looks at his contribution in the light of what was discussed in chapters 2 and 3 (Arab intellectual life, literature before the press, the 'socialization' of literature, the problems of *saj`* and *badī`*, and so forth), then one can realise how innovative, pioneering and significant his efforts really were, and why he deserves to be honoured and admired. Professor al-`Aqqād said,

Al-Manfalūḥī was one of those few writers who put meaning and intention into Arabic *inshā`* (composition) after all meaning had forsaken it... Only those who study the styles of previous generations will know the significance of this blessed stage (which al-Manfalūḥī brought about). Previously the style was conservative and the same in all writings. It was present in every *maqāma* and known before the writer even lifted his pen ... the aim of writing was like that of the sermons delivered from the pulpits, repeated in its texts, its topics and its tone, as if they were played from a tape recorder ... expressions were filled with, and limited to, difficult *saj`*, repetitive idioms, hackneyed duplication (and thereby losing its impact and becoming dull), and *Qur`ānic* verses quoted out of context. Writers were too scared to change the order of the words or expressions of previous works, and if one could gather all of these expressions, they would fill up (only) one book. This was the state of writing during the generations before al-Manfalūḥī and his contemporaries. The articles in magazines and newspapers, the translations of Western compositions, and the literature of the Arabic heritage ... made it essential to change the writing style... The importance of al-Manfalūḥī was that he did not suffer from the effects of ... the *saj`* and *badī`* styles of writing, but was able to tread a new way in which meaning and intention (simultaneously) entered Arabic compositions ... (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 86).

The well-known author and critic `Umar al-Dasūqī said in this regard,

Al-Manfalūḥī was able to start a new way in literary writing, a way which was diametrically opposite to that of the writers of the nineteenth century ... who used different shades of *saj`* and *badī`* ... repeating its *kināya* (metonymy), *tashbīh* (analogy) and *majāz* (metaphor) even when they did not suit the topic or the atmosphere or the period ... likewise (al-Manfalūḥī's) way was opposite to that of the prose in the newspapers at the time ... (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 86-87).

Al-Manfalūḥī's contribution must also be seen in the light of the colonization of Egypt at that point in history. He was one of the few writers who could effectively defend the classical Arabic language with the pen against the colonizers who wanted to use the colloquial Arabic language as a means to break the unity of the different Arab and Muslim peoples. He succeeded admirably in making his people see the beauty and power of the

classical language, and eloquently convinced his fellow Arabs that the Arabic language was, and must always be, one of his objects of pride.

Doctor Aḥmad Haikal described al-Manfalūḥī as “the most prominent figure in the first art school of modern Arabic prose which can bear his name, that is, *Madrasa al-Manfalūḥī* (The School of al-Manfalūḥī) or *Tarīqa al-Manfalūḥī* (The Style of al-Manfalūḥī)” (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 87).

Al-Manfalūḥī's compositions and his influence in prose can be compared to those of Aḥmad Shauqī's in poetry, bearing in mind the differences between the two artists – Shauqī was on a higher level as an artist, more firmly grounded in Arabic poetry, and was therefore able to contribute much more in the field of poetry than al-Manfalūḥī in prose, but each of them was a symbol in his own right of the pioneering development in his specific art at the time (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 87). On the subject of poets, the words of Khouri and Algar so fittingly apply to al-Manfalūḥī as well:

Nevertheless, with their relatively imposing standards of ‘good sense’, ‘refinement’, and ‘correctness’ in structure and style, and their tendency toward an emotional expression of patriotic and social themes, these poets undoubtedly revived a petrified poetic language, revitalized a dying aesthetic sensibility, reached a wider range of the general public, and achieved in a substantial part of their poetry an authentic expression of current ideas and aspirations...and championed the cause of progress, national freedom and liberal thought (our emphasis) (1974: 6 & 7).

Doctor Aḥmad Haikal maybe gave the most accurate description of al-Manfalūḥī when he said,

The style which al-Manfalūḥī initiated was a conservative, clear and eloquent style, comparable to the style of (Aḥmad) Shauqī in poetry. Al-Manfalūḥī was the apex of those who wrote in this way since the time when Muḥammad `Abduh had pioneered it during the previous period, in the same manner as Shauqī was the apex of the poets who wrote in a conservative, clear and eloquent way since the time when al-Bārūdī had shown the way during the previous period too (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 87).

Al-Manfalūḥī was a powerful answer to the needs of his time as far as style was concerned. His *maqālāt* were thus accepted and welcomed in an unprecedented way. They forcefully attracted students of literature and chanters in that field. They would gather around his books in circles, reading them five, six, seven times, and would wish that they could connect physically and mentally to al-Manfalūḥī.

Henceforth, al-Manfalūḥī's influence would be clear in the literary school that

followed on his appearance, that is, the school of musical mode, salutary form and radiant style. The influence of this style could be seen in the works of the famous Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt and ʿĀhā ʿusain (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 87-88). Abū al-Anwār quotes Doctor Aḥmad Haykal's comments about the period that followed the revolt in 1919:

One of the results was that the *badī'* style (of writing) in prose disappeared completely, and two clear artistic directions in prose could be noticed, namely the 'style direction' and the 'idea direction'. As for the 'style direction', it appeared as an extension of al-Manfalūḥī's way (of writing) which was concerned with radiant style and wonderful rhetoric, and which gave special attention to shape and form (2000: 88).

He continued, "The most prominent writers of the 'style direction' possessed Arabic culture as a basis, and some of them added a wide European culture to it, like ʿĀhā ʿusain, Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt .... None of them stopped at al-Manfalūḥī's stage, but surpassed it in proficiency and precision in both content and form ..." (2000: 88).

Professor Anwār al-Jundī said, "Whatever the opinion about al-Manfalūḥī's style, he definitely influenced the writing of al-Rāfi'ī, al-Zayyāt, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Basharī and ʿĀhā ʿusain" (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 88). Doctor Mandūr admitted that he was one of those influenced by al-Manfalūḥī's style. Actually, the whole generation that followed al-Manfalūḥī was influenced by him. His effect on the style of modern prose was thus far reaching, and even the critic and author, Doctor Muḥammad Abū al-Anwār, remembered the effect the study of al-Manfalūḥī's compositions, then al-Zayyāt's and later Doctor ʿĀhā ʿusain's literary works had on him and his fellow students, even after such a long time had elapsed (2000: 89).

As explained earlier (chapters 1 and 2), the period of al-Manfalūḥī suffered many a weakness and deficiency due to the colonizers and their allies. Egypt experienced the oppressive rule of the Turks, then the French invasion overwhelmed them, and afterwards the rule of Muḥammad ʿAlī (d. 1849) and the viceroys who succeeded him, heaped on them the worst of problems imaginable. Furthermore, the English colonized her and took control of the country and its wealth for well over seventy years. Al-Manfalūḥī lived through the English colonization period and his writings were thus an answer to the spirit of the time. As also explained before, the colonialists eased the restrictions on publications and allowed the newspapers to have their say and for political parties to be established. By allowing this, they thought that in-fighting amongst the parties and arguments amongst the newspapers would wear out the Egyptians' efforts and spirit. However, the newspapers and the political parties were all united in their attacks on the colonialists. They campaigned vociferously for their removal from Egypt and stepped up the struggle for their independence and freedom. The

role and influence of the press in this connection were discussed in quite detail.

Al-Manfalūḡī, as a son of that period, was one of the writers who answered the colonizers the most. He did it in a clear and civil way. He also treated the problem of the lack of social justice that, if left unattended and unaddressed, seriously threatened to split the different levels of society. Social injustice led to widespread poverty, general humiliation and oppression, and hypocrisy. Al-Manfalūḡī thus struggled for the sake of the poor, defended them and made them more worthy and important than the inane rich who were despicable and lacked virtue. He was very desirous of providing effective aid to the suffering poor, and sometimes, instead of criticizing the wealthy and asking for the return of the rights of the poor, he invited them to *iḡsān* (goodness) and *faḡīla* (virtue), hoping thereby to entice them to see to the needs of the unfortunate poor. He wrote about how the ideal model of morals and goodness is eroded in a society that suffers under poverty and oppression at the hands of the colonizers. He wrote “as if he was the trunk of a tree made of stone and sunk in a volcano” to wipe out the widespread evils and immorality. Al-Manfalūḡī was well qualified to do this because he himself represented high morals, possessed subtle senses, had a firm belief in God and practised upright behaviour.

As far as literature is concerned, as mentioned before, al-Manfalūḡī was firstly on the side of the language of the *Qur’ān* (that is, classical Arabic), because he wrote sound essays to confirm that the Arabic language is rich and capable and not backward and weak as some writers, who were under the influence of the colonizers and their supporters, claimed. His style thus made a big impression on the sons of Arabic (Abū al-Anwār 2000: 89-91). An English orientalist, in describing al-Manfalūḡī’s *maqālāt* said,

These essays were published under the title of *al-Naḡarāt*. They were composed between very lofty literature and satisfying the readers’ taste, because they were written with pure, musical language. They descended as a model of inspiration on a populace which was accustomed to difficult, artificial literature. They, therefore, spread widely amongst the Arabic readers, from Baghdad to Marrakech, which indicated that they found and loved something worthwhile in them ... they were also the best representatives of the feelings which echoed throughout the Islamic world (quoted in Abū al-Anwār 2000: 91).

Al-Manfalūḡī thus made an invaluable contribution in the development of a new style in modern Arabic prose. The other aspect which made him great and which gave him an immortal place in Arabic literature is his topics on humanity and his treatment of urgent and earnest social issues. All of this, as was explained in various places, confirms that al-Manfalūḡī was ‘a teacher of *akhlāq* (manners), a caller to *faḡīla* (virtue), and a leader in *iḡlāḡ* (social reformation)’. He was a natural answer to the needs of his time, in Egypt

specifically and in the entire Arab nation generally.

### Criticism of al-Manfalūḡī

Besides al-Manfalūḡī's literary books receiving great fame in all parts of the Arab world, he did not escape the tongues and pens of the critics. But then the fate of every great writer, artist, politician, and so forth, is to have his / her supporters and detractors.

The main points which detract from the merits, worth, value and excellence of his works and contribution are:

1. Al-Manfalūḡī spoiled the French stories with his 'Arabization' of them and by changing them from the originals. Perhaps he thought that the *qiḡḡa* was a group of *maqālāt* without a specific structure (Ḍaif 1974: 230).
2. His stories lacked some imagination, precision in observing life's events, accuracy in the portrayal of characters, and the novelty of *mufāja'āt* (unforeseen surprises or twists) in the story (Ḍaif 1974: 231). Incidents are few; characterization is two-dimensional, portraying types rather than individuals; and moral upliftment is the prime aim.
3. He was not versatile in thought because of his limited culture and thus could not expand his senses and mental faculties (compared to the generations that followed) (Ḍaif 1974: 233). ḡarād quotes Ḥasan al-Zayyāt who remarked, "There are two things which prevent al-Manfalūḡī from having the appellation of 'immortal', namely weakness of device and limited culture. He did not attain Eastern sciences and had no direct connection with Western sciences. His literature thus remained superficial and naïve" (2003: 8).
4. Many writers like Ibrāhīm `Abd al- Qādir al-Māzinī, felt that al-Manfalūḡī's compositions seldom satisfied the mind with plenty of food for thought and ideas (Ḍaif 1974: 233). Al-Māzinī said that al-Manfalūḡī's style was tender and empty; it consisted of tears which only adolescents found fascinating (Ḍaif 1974: 190). Al-Māzinī and al-`Aqqād referred to al-Manfalūḡī when they wrote: "We must live our lives. We must live in the world with our minds and feel with our nerves. We must not live with our bodies in this period while following with our minds and nerves



(feelings) generations which had passed with its good, bad, truth and lies” (quoted in ʿarād 2003: 8).

5. His opinions about literary criticism in *al-Naʿarāt* are not very profound and have no extensive analysis. This may be due to his limited culture (Ḍaif 1974: 233).
6. He preferred books to life. The Lebanese writer ʿUmar Fakhūrī, who was his severest critic, believed that al-Manfalūḡī spent more time with books than he did with life (people). He also said, “His literary method is obscure, and his opinions about creating literature are unclear” (quoted in ʿarād 2003: 8).

Concerning the above-mentioned criticisms, we must of course remember to measure a writer with the instruments of his / her period, and to judge him / her according to his / her environment, and not to take him / her to the succeeding period and use the measuring yardsticks of that period on him / her. Therefore, if we assess al-Manfalūḡī according to the period that he lived in, then he gave Egypt as from the beginning of the twentieth century to the First World War, and even beyond, brilliant and skilful literary works that served as models for the youth of his time and the generations which followed.

Fakhūrī, mentioned in point 6 above, would himself admit that he (al-Manfalūḡī) was good at choosing words and that he had a good taste in rhetoric, and that his words carried music, magic, were easy on the ear, and could take hold of and captivate the self.

Ḥasan al-Zayyāt also acknowledged that al-Manfalūḡī’s success was due to the combination of al-Manfalūḡī’s wonderful stories in which he described people’s pain and suffering, and his lofty style, sweet rhetoric and good choice of words (ʿarād 2003: 8).

Ṭāhā ʿusain used to criticize him for the use of ‘wrong’ and ‘inappropriate’ words, but would later retract, saying: “I feel ashamed when I have to talk about this because it was an erroneous evaluation; I was actually criticizing his use of words from a linguistic point of view – and I published my explanation under the title *Naʿarāt fī al-Naʿarāt* ... and I was only about eighteen years old” (quoted in Al-Dasūqī 2002: 45). On another occasion he reiterated,

I have never been so shy about what I’ve written as my attack on the deceased al-Manfalūḡī; what I wrote was nonsense, my only concern was whether al-Manfalūḡī was using his words correctly, grammatically and linguistically. In this I only relied on one dictionary, and this was my mistake – so I am embarrassed about what I wrote of al-Manfalūḡī (quoted in Al-Dasūqī 2002: 105).

As far as characterization is concerned, the remarks in point 2 above are justifiable, especially if we look at one of the requirements of a successful short story: "... In literary prose, the author must give expression to the thoughts of the characters and analyse them ... Characterization is one of the most important aspects of the short story; the writer must portray it realistically and according to the story and the development of the plot ...” (Shayāmī 1995: 28).

One of the main criticisms against al-Manfalūḡī is his limited culture (point 3 above), but Aḡmad ḡāfiḡ `Awaḡ pointed out:

If it is true that good (Arab) writers of that period derived the spirit of their writings from foreign languages, and that they invoked the sky for inspiration with the talents of French poets for their poetic imagination, then mister al-Manfalūḡī, who knew no other language than Arabic, and who never resorted to inspiration except with his own feelings, must be the rarest Arabic writer of the time (quoted in al-Jābī 2002: I/55-56).

John A. Haywood gives such a balanced, unprejudiced and objective overall assessment of al-Manfalūḡī and his works that some of his remarks are justifiably valuable to be reiterated here:

He had a genuine desire to avoid artificiality, and to write simply and clearly for his age. ... (but) in practice he constantly lapses into a studied style which is anything but modern. His content seldom rises above what would be considered trite in the West ... Yet this very triteness struck a new note for his readers, being not only sincere, but relevant to everyday life as they saw it... He was an idealist, but sometimes gives an impression of intolerance and a ‘holier than thou’ attitude ... (his style) is modern balagha at its best, full of rhyme, of balanced phrases and sentences, of simile and metaphor... These essays are as superb a display of classical Arabic prose-writing as will be found in the whole of the modern literature ... he could write simply ... but as he warms to his subject ... the complexities creep in – or rather burst in. Yet if the style is rather antique, the themes and attitudes are up-to-date ... His essay themes run the whole gamut of current ethical and social problems ... Special tribute must be paid to (his) exquisite sense of form in his essays. He often begins in a straightforward way, stating the problem under discussion, then gradually works up to a climax, and finally dies away to the end of the essay... In fact, he challenges comparison with essayists in many other languages, for the wide variety of his themes and their treatment, and his command of language and form... He pulls at the heart – strings ... To the European with no feeling for classical Arabic literature, he seems Victorian, with the smugness and moral attitudes of a former generation. To those immersed in the classical literature, he must have seemed to represent the best that could be hoped for in modern literature... his readers ... were struck to find that this style could be so effectively used to discuss current everyday problems. With him, journalism had become art (1971: 139-42).

Two eminent authors and critics quoted by Dr. Jibrāīl S. Jabbūr (1983) also give us a good insight into al-Manfalūḡ's standing in the Arab literary world:

Aḡmad `Abid: Al-Manfalūḡ was an excellent writer when he wrote on literature and related issues, but poor when he wrote on social and related affairs (page xiii-xiv).

H.A.R. Gibb: Although al-Manfalūḡ desired and tried sincerely to keep to the original, he fell very short on 'Uthmān Jalāl's translation of *Paul et Virginie* ... and stripped it of its excellence and merits ... despite his wonderful writing style" (xv).

The other criticisms by Ḥasan al-Zayyāt, al-Māzinī and al-`Aqqād, Tāhā Ḥusain and Fakhūrī have already been recorded in the introduction and above; Jabbūr gives more space to favourable observations (especially about al-Manfalūḡ's style) which, to our knowledge, have not been translated or quoted in English works of note; so it is worthwhile to record some of them here:

Jabbūr: His style was unique for his time, and his works played a major role in influencing the training and the writing of the youth of that period (xvi).

Al-Māzinī: Although we condemn this old style in literature, its men (i.e. al-Manfalūḡ and his like) must receive credit for the spread of the Arabic language, the development of its writing styles, and turning the people's attention to the magnificent heritage left for us by the Arabs and which was neglected by our ancestors for many centuries (xvii).

`Umar Fakhūrī: As for his beautiful choice of words and taste in *ḡayan*, he reached the uppermost limit; his compositions are pure magical music to the ears (xvii).

Ḥasan al-Zayyāt: The secret of the widespreadness of al-Manfalūḡ's literature is that it dawned at a transitional period in (Arabic) literature, and he surprised the people with these wonderful stories that described the pain and the shortcomings in a pleasant style, sweet *ḡayān*, uniform and steady context, and with choice words ... he is one of the greatest writers of the recent intellectual revival and the most eloquent of the modern period in as far as elegant and graceful sentences, delicacy of expression, and realistic description of incidents ... are concerned (xvii-xviii).

Aḡmad Bek Luḡfī al-Sayyid: (He is) of our masters of *ḡayān* – in style, I can hardly find a comparable writer ... he uses words in a special way – a way such that it has no other meaning but what he intended, (thereby) making difficult topics easy for his readers ... (xix)

Mārī Yanī (an Arab lady): How I felt the day I read his book! – it was as if my soul was plucked out of my body, and that which passed in front my eyes was the conspicuous truth with which hearts are pulverized, emotions are intrigued and filled with hopes, and (with which) youthfulness appeared. I didn't leave the book until the bulk of my feelings were attracted by the powers of despair to a place where it couldn't find rest. He described to me misery in all its dreadful forms, and I remained under its painful influence with a pulverised heart and despondent spirit ... (xxiii).

Jabbūr continues:

The very first thing you notice when you read (his works) is the absence of *saj'* (which writers were so proud to use) in his style ...and his ability to give the exact required meaning with appropriate words ... and his richness in synonyms ...

What established al-Manfalūḡī's popularity firmly with Egyptian literary figures is his attachment and commitment to some social issues which prevailed during the previous periods, for example the ḡijāb and the belief that woman was intellectually inferior to man, and (also) his condemnation of many of the West's habits and way of life which the Egyptians began to adopt after mixing with them or after visiting Europe.

It is essential that we do not deny that al-Manfalūḡī, in his stories and articles, tried to fight against bad morals and for the reformation of his society. He called for social justice, and defended women – who were weak in his opinion – and the poor and destitute. He struggled for the implementation of the *din* and its *shari'a* into the people for he was *al-Shaikh`Abduh's* student and faithful friend ... (xix-xxi).

Thus, by the end of the First World War and the early 1920's an author like Muḡḡafā Luḡfī al-Manfalūḡī progressed beyond the classical limitations of the previous century and produced works with a more modern character. Moreover, it was creative literature and one can safely say that al-Manfalūḡī was one of the major writers who contributed to laying the basis for the revival of modern Arabic literature and who helped to ultimately establish classical literary Arabic in the lofty place it occupies today in the literatures of the world. His pen possessed the ability to clearly put over his ideas in a simple way, avoiding *saj`* and *badī`*, and to attract and charm the reader. He became known as the *Amīr al-Bayān* (The Prince of Rhetoric). His writings were accepted and welcomed, not only in Egypt, but also in the Arab world as a whole. His style had a special effect on the reader's self: it was as if he was writing with his heart and not a pen, and was addressing the heart and soul and not the lines or paper. This style became the ideal model for the youth who were studying in schools, institutes and universities, and for even his contemporary writers. His most distinguishing characteristic in the world of Arab literature at that time was his power to present misfortune and tragedy, and his ability to describe the sadness, grief and suffering of the self. He was especially close to the poor, and fought for justice and equality on their behalf. Although he was somewhat addicted to his heroes / heroines dying of consumption or of broken hearts, one cannot read any of his works without having empathy toward and sympathy for, the victim. He was the only writer of his time who was acutely aware of the fact that that which he described with his pen was what was actually in his heart, so much so that readers could sense that what he was describing were their real feelings, virtues and personalities, nothing more, nothing less. Those who knew him bore witness that he

possessed those characteristics that he was writing about in his essays and short stories.

From all that has been mentioned and discussed, it can be seen that Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī's works were epoch-making and absolutely epitomized the Arabic literature of his time. He was an outstanding genius and, in short, fully deserves the epithets:

*Nābigha al-inshā' wa al-kitāba al-nathariyya* (A Genius of Composition and Prose Writing) and *Mu'allim al-akhlāq, Dā'iya al-faḥḥa wa Qā'id al-iḥṣān* (The Teacher of Manners, Caller to Virtue, and Leader in Social Reformation of His Time).

### **Conclusion**

In tracing the development of Arabic essay and short story as new forms of Arabic literature, it was essential to go back to the beginning of the nineteenth century (and sometimes to even earlier periods) to put the development in its true perspective. The focus was on the major political events that had a direct bearing on the topic. Referring back to past events and people was also necessary to put Muḥammad al-Manfalūṭī's literary works and his vital contribution into context. In other words, the discovery of new forms of literature and their evolution, and the author's contribution, are inseparable from the efficacious historical factors and conditions in Egypt before, during and after the nineteenth century. These factors and influences gave impetus to the genesis of the new forms of literature and to the emergence of a writer like al-Manfalūṭī. Arab intellectualism was Westernized by the introduction of European culture. In fact, Arabic culture became involved in "a conscious and dynamic conflict" with Western culture, and "Out of this conflict between East and West modern Arabic literature was born" (Badawi 1974: 13). Consequently, traditionalism and modernism, instead of clashing with each other, had run parallel to each other in modern Arabic literature.

Since the sixteenth century, the Egyptians were living in distress and misery under the Ottoman rule. The result was that culture and science became stagnant, and intellectual and literary life grounded to a halt. It was under these circumstances that Napoleon 1 invaded Egypt. The epoch-making introduction of the printing press and the translation of European literature (mainly French and English) into Arabic led to the Western influences in culture, politics and economics. The important part played by translators, editors and correctors cannot

be exaggerated because “It (was) the translation of scientific works, together with journalism, that in the course of time helped to rid modern Arabic prose (and ultimately poetry) of the excessive preoccupation with *badī`* and other forms of verbal ingenuity” (Badawi 1974: 10). Through these translations, the Egyptians became familiar with not only Western technology, science and philosophy but with classical and modern Western literature (especially its themes and techniques). The viceroys of Egypt and the Syrian-Lebanese emigrators played a major role in this respect. It led, too, to the revival of the Arabic and Islamic heritage when the classical works of Arab and Muslim writers of previous centuries were restudied and re-interpreted and put into print. The classical models showed that classical Arabic was strong and capable enough to impart modern thought and ideas in literature, the natural sciences, politics, economics, and so forth. It had the vigour and precision to meet contemporary needs. Furthermore, thought and ideas could be expressed with a simple style and in a language free from rhymed prose, metaphoric style and empty formalism. The return to the Arab heritage of the past (also called neoclassicism), marked the first stage in the modern literary revival.

The French invasion and later the English occupation, despite their negative aspects, kindled and fostered the sentiment of nationalism. This colonialism, naturally, provoked resistance from the religious, political and literary fraternities in the form of revolts, public sermons, newspaper articles and literary essays. Together the introduction of the printing press, the translation of Western literature and the restoration of the classical Arab and Islamic literary heritage gave birth to a new modern Arabic literature, simpler writing styles, and (through the efforts of a group of able writers) saved classical Arabic from the degeneration and impoverishment of the previous centuries. Many of these writers tried their hand at original compositions and were so successful that their works served as models for the next generation. They experimented with the literary essay, the drama, the short story and the novel and, although mostly functional in approach, succeeded to elegantly and aesthetically relate the values of Arabic and Islamic culture to the modern world. It was stimulating literature, written for, and understood by, the great majority of Arabs. This history of the evolution of modern Arabic prose in Egypt and the factors and influences that helped to shape it enables a person to better interpret and appreciate Arabic literature, Arab intellectualism and even Islamic modernism. It helps to clarify political, intellectual and religious notions presented in Western books on Arabic and *Islām*. Similarly, the allusion to names, events, movements, and ideas (that puzzle the Western reader) in literature about Arabs and Muslims becomes more comprehensible. This is so because the mentioned Arabic literature touched on all aspects of Arab life and culture and faithfully reflected local political, social, intellectual, economic and cultural conditions. The prose compositions, like

poetry, were a true mirror of Arabian life. Incidentally, it would be interesting to research whether literature greater in quality and quantity are presently produced in other Arab countries because there are many young Arabs writing now in all Arab lands (and it is therefore not possible to point to any single centre), or whether Egypt and / or *al-Shām* are still dominant in this respect. No less important would be to consider whether they write with lesser or greater degrees of social, religious or political engagement, and, as has been mentioned before, to what extent have they succeeded in bridging the complex problem of written Arabic and the normal spoken language.

H.A.R. Gibb, quoted by Reynold A. Nicholson (1966: 469), remarked that for many decades the partisans of the ‘old’ (that is, the traditionally-educated scholars of the less advanced Arabic lands) and the ‘new’ (that is, the Western-educated classes) have engaged in a struggle for the soul of the Arabic world. A further, more detailed study which reviews the prose literature of major writers who appeared from the mid- twentieth century up to today can perhaps reveal who has ‘won’ this battle or whether the struggle is still on-going. Like in any period and environment of any culture, a movement has its roots; in this instance, the literary revival commenced in the generation before al-Manfalūḡī– with Rafā’a al-Ṭahāwī, then *Imam* Muḡammad ‘Abduh and his *ustāth* Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, then the students of ‘Abduh, starting with Sa’ad Zaghlūl in the field of politics, Qāsim Amīn in the social field, Muḡḡafā ‘Abd al-Razzāq in philosophy and Muḡḡafā al-Marāghī in religion (Kurayyim 2004: 59). In fact, one of al-Afghānī’s greatest achievements was his ability to inspire writers and politicians who would achieve immortal fame in the near future, personalities like the already mentioned ‘Abduh, Amīn and Zaghlūl, al-Muwailaḡī, Salīm Naqqāsh, and Adīb Isḡāq and ‘Abd Allāh al-Nadīm whose contributions are discussed in section 3.4.5). The works of those writers of substance who came after Muḡḡafā Luḡfī al-Manfalūḡī (for example Ibrāhīm ‘Abd al- Qādir al-Māzinī, Khalīl Maḡrān, Ṭāhā ḡusain and Aḡmad ḡasan al-Zayyāt) and the generation who followed them (for example Taufīq al-ḡakīm, Maḡmūd Taimūr, Ṭāhir Lāshin, Najīb Maḡfūḡ, and Yaḡyā ḡaqqī) can be a starting point. They were writers of individuality and originality. Their works are due for reappraisal and can be translated into English because, while extant works of importance are readily accessible to Arabists, comparatively few of them are available to Western scholars in reliable translations.

An attempt was made to show how a writer, in this instance Muḡḡafā Luḡfī al-Manfalūḡī, contributed towards laying the foundation for the revival of modern Arabic prose by writing literary essays and short stories with stylistic devices unknown in Egypt at that time. He helped to establish classical literary Arabic in the lofty place it occupies today in the literatures of the world. He became known as the *Amīr al-Bayān*, and his writings were

welcomed in the entire Arab world. His style became the ideal model for his contemporaries and for the writers of the following generation. Al-Manfalūṭī made his literary reputation in the Egyptian press and rekindled the enthusiasm for Arab national literature. His most distinguishing characteristic was his power to present misfortune and tragedy, and his ability to describe the sadness, grief and suffering of the self. He was especially close to the poor, and fought for justice and equality on their behalf. One cannot read any of his works without having empathy towards the victims in his stories.

His success as a writer was partly due because his subject matter originated from the natural and sincere feelings he had towards his people and the deep consciousness he had of the miserable conditions in which his society existed. Furthermore, his writings were popular in the Arab world because they expressed the people's feelings, hopes and dreams, and described their individual and societal lives clearly and truthfully. His apt use of words and simple stylistic devices affected his readers emotionally and in this way, they identified with him and regarded him as the protector of their society.

It was necessary to deal fairly fully with his biography and social relationships to give a fuller picture of him as a man and the type of society in which he grew up. Writing style is intertwined with personality and environment. A writer's character and his / her environment provide vital clues in understanding his / her thoughts, ideas, opinions and literary methodology. At the same time, they provide the background for the literature of the period because a writer will normally write about the issues affecting his / her society, and his / her attitude towards these issues will be reflected in these writings. A wide range of his ideas and opinions from politics to the role and status of the female sex in society, were thus discussed. Most of the social topics he wrote on have a 'universality' about them because they touched on issues, conflicts and problems which are still relevant and applicable to modern societies in all parts of the world.

Al-Manfalūṭī's six most celebrated literary compositions were analysed and discussed to illustrate the topics he covered, his stylistic devices, and (as mentioned above) to determine his ideas and opinions on certain issues, to point out the role of translation in his works, and to ascertain why his essays and short stories were so successful and popular.

Al-Manfalūṭī's essence was determined by five factors ... the moral training of his father, ... the countryside environment of Egypt, ... the correct belief doctrines implanted by *al-Azhar*, ... Imam Muḥammad 'Abduh's methodology of social reconciliation, ... and to take pride in and be sincere about one's work as espoused by Sa'ad Zaghlul ... this made him value *faḍīla* and gave him a serious outlook on life; he was sensitive of feeling and emotion, delicate of spirit, calm of temperament, severely compassionate to the miserable and weak, felt the pain and suffering of others, earnestly concerned about the truth, and toiled for the justice of the down-trodden. ... These characteristics combined to affect his



writing – calling for virtuous words, sincerity in speech and honesty of heart; he called for noble deeds, urged morality in behaviour, and espoused loyalty and commitment to faithfulness... in this way his compositions educated the developing youth and helped to bring about a generation that held on to mercy, goodness, co-operation, and generosity in an atmosphere of sincere love, a love free of selfishness (Qāsim 2001: 19).

Only brief mention was made of his attempts at poetry because the focus was on his prose works. The poetic aspect of his literary life can serve as a topic for further research. He himself admitted that his poetry was of the second degree compared to the contributions of Aḥmad Shauqī and ʿĀfī ʾIbrāhīm, but according to critics, his poetry is worthwhile studying and analyzing because poets and poetry of the nineteenth century played no small role in the development of modern Arabic literature. His poetry may also shed more light on his ideas and the social issues of the time. After all, he was imprisoned due to one of the poems (a lampoon) which he had written. Due to time and space constraints some of his works like *al-Mukhtārāt* and *al-ʿAbarāt* and many articles of *al-Naḥārāt* were not discussed and analyzed in detail, thus leaving a lot of scope for future research. These works can also be examined in the light of how they and his writing style influenced the above-mentioned prominent writers who came after him, and whether the ‘conservatives’ (traditionally-educated) or the ‘modernists’ (Western-educated) prevailed in the ensuing years. They can further show how the later writers improved on what al-Manfalūḥī had initiated. The study can perhaps also illustrate how traditionalism and modernism in modern Arabic literature do not contradict each other, and that modernism does not necessarily mean a breakaway from the cherished Islamic traditions of the past. It can also open the eyes of the modern world to the rich values of the Arab and Muslim cultural traditions.

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